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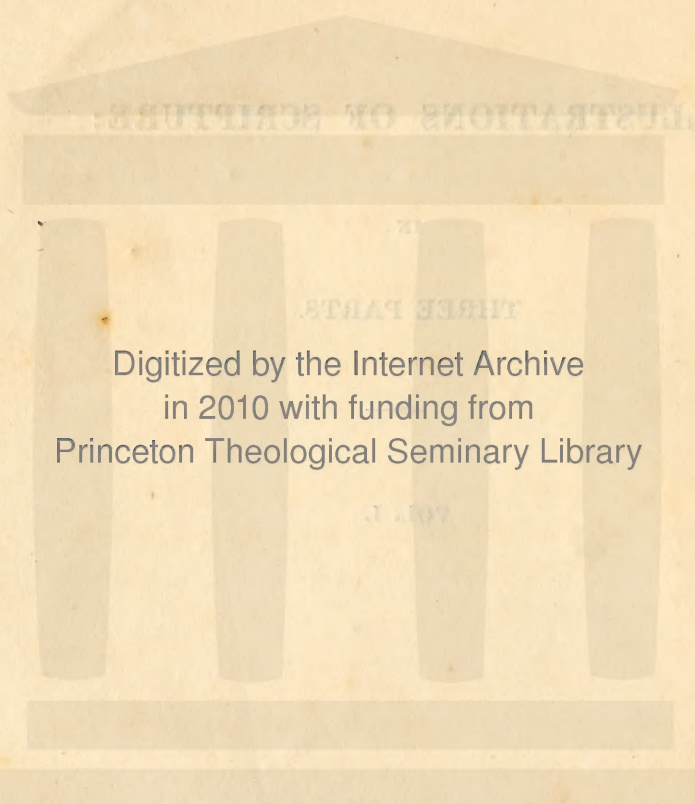
ILLUSTRATIONS OF SCRIPTURE:

IN

THREE PARTS.



VOL. I.



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ILLUSTRATIONS

OF THE

HOLY SCRIPTURES:

IN THREE PARTS.

I.

FROM THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE EAST.

II.

FROM THE NATURAL HISTORY OF THE EAST.

III.

FROM THE CUSTOMS OF ANCIENT AND MODERN NATIONS.

BY THE REV. GEORGE PAXTON,

PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY UNDER THE GENERAL ASSOCIATE SYNOD,
EDINBURGH.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

EDINBURGH:

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1819.

Medical Library

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PREFACE.

THE present times are happily distinguished by an uncommon attention to the Holy Scriptures. By the unprecedented exertions of the religious public, this inestimable gift of Heaven, which has brought life and immortality to light, is circulated far and wide among the nations; and the day seems to be rapidly approaching, when every people and every tribe shall read in their own language the wonderful works of God. The object is worthy of even greater exertions than have yet been made, and of a much larger expense than has yet been incurred; for the Scriptures are the power of God and the wisdom of God, to the salvation of perishing sinners. They present the most sublime and instructive subjects of contemplation to the human mind; they restrain the angry and impetuous passions which agitate the bosom of man, and too frequently break forth in deeds of shame; they purify his desires and affections; they expand and invigorate his faculties; they elevate and enlarge his views; and wherever they come, wherever their voice is heard and their authority acknowledged, they rescue from a state of ignorance and barbarity, vice and profligacy; they humanize the heart, and adorn the life; they form the strongest and sweetest bond of

civil society, and open the purest and most abundant sources of individual and public happiness. To what is to be ascribed the remarkable difference between the wisest, the most learned and polished nations of antiquity, and the communities of modern Europe among whom the Scriptures are allowed to circulate freely? Is it, as many contend, to the instruction and influence of a more enlightened and efficacious philosophy; or to the unobserved, but powerful energy of the divine word? An impartial and intelligent observer will be at no loss to determine. Philosophy herself has been indebted to Revelation for much the greater part of her wisdom and refinement; she has detected many of her principal errors at the light of divine truth; has relinquished her prejudices and follies by its secret influence; and has borrowed from it her wisest lessons, her most powerful motives, and her brightest and most elevated views. To this, and not to any power of her own, must be referred the superiour and more salutary impressions which she produces in modern times.

BUT the great and important amelioration in the sentiments and conduct of civil society, is the least part of the benefit which the Scriptures bestow. They discover the real character of God, and of his rational creature; they describe the state of sin and misery into which we have fallen, and the wonderful method which infinite wisdom contrived for our deliverance—the obedience and death of the Son of God. The change which they produce in the unrenewed mind, is of incalculable value and of eternal duration; it cannot be described with

more force and propriety than in the words of inspiration itself: "The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes." While the noblest lessons of moral science are confined to the narrow span of human life, the word of God draws aside the veil which conceals a future state, and unfolds the final destinies of man; it points our hopes to enjoyments beyond the grave, commensurate with the vast desires and capacities of the glorified spirit, and durable as the nature and perfections of the Eternal; and our fears, to sufferings equally intense and permanent.

A TREASURE so precious, surely possesses a strong claim to the affectionate and solicitous attention of mankind, and imposes a duty on all who enjoy it, to facilitate, in their respective stations and by all the means in their power, its acceptance, and secure to themselves and others, the numerous and important blessings which it contains. The call of duty has not been heard in vain; men of great capacity and deep research, have investigated, with complete success, the claims of the Scriptures to a divine origin, and exhibited in the most satisfactory manner the grounds upon which they rest; patient and learned expositors have laboured to ascertain and illustrate the meaning, and acute critics to dissipate the obscurity which hangs over some part, of the sacred text. But something more was required, fully to elucidate the sense, and display the incomparable accuracy,

force, and beauty of the inspired writings;—an accurate knowledge of the natural phenomena and moral condition of the east. When the time of the promise drew near, that the earth should be filled with the knowledge of the LORD, he sent forth his agents to visit those remote regions where the scene of our redemption is laid, and collect the necessary information. Animated by the daring spirit of commercial adventure, or prompted by a fearless and romantic curiosity, men of intelligence and observation made their way into every region on which the light of Revelation had shone, and mingled familiarly with almost every people to whom the holy Scriptures had been originally addressed. Whether they were actuated by a principle of hostility or love to the writings of the prophets and apostles, the result of their inquiries, as might be expected, was the same—the statements of inspiration were illustrated and confirmed by their narratives.

BUT the rich and ample materials which those travelers had collected in their perilous wanderings, were scattered over a multitude of writings in different languages, which the greater part of Christians could neither procure nor understand, and intermixed with remarks and observations on many general subjects, which had no relation to Sacred Literature. Even few Biblical students had leisure to travel over so wide a field, or patience to note the facts and statements which served to illustrate the sacred page. To separate those materials, therefore, from the extraneous matter with which they were encumbered, and to give them a condensed and

systematic form, was to render a service of no inconsiderable importance to the interests of truth and holiness. Urged by this consideration, various writers, both in our own country and on the Continent, have, at different times, directed their attention to this department, and favoured the religious world with occasional remarks, or formal treatises of great value. The voluminous works of the learned and indefatigable BOCHART, the Jewish Antiquities of IKENIUS and others, clearly prove how necessary and useful, in the estimation of Foreign divines, are writings of that kind to the Biblical student, and to every person who desires to obtain a full and accurate acquaintance with the records of inspiration. The celebrity which the Observations of HARMER, and the Oriental Customs of BURDER, have recently acquired, leave no room to doubt, that the friends of religious truth at home entertain the same views.

THE mind of the writer has been long impressed with the necessity and advantage of applying the physical and moral circumstances of the east, to the exposition of the Scriptures. He is well aware, that this mode of interpretation may be carried too far. A glowing imagination may suggest a relation between some text of Scripture and an oriental custom, where none actually exists; but neither are the other methods of exposition exempt from danger. Critical acumen has but too frequently given a false view of the sacred text. It is readily granted, that an oriental phenomenon or custom, ought not to invade the province of genuine criticism, abridge her legitimate rights, and supersede the due exercise of

her powers. It is only when she fails to elicit the meaning of a passage by the usual methods, or when some obscurity remains after all her exertions, which she is unable to remove, that the Biblical student may call for their assistance. They have a right to decide, only when the other is mute, and to perfect what the other has been compelled to leave unfinished. When oriental circumstances are kept within their proper sphere, and applied with judgment and caution, it is humbly conceived, they may be of great utility in expounding the holy Scriptures.

IN this conviction, the Author commenced a series of Lectures on the subject, to the Theological students under his charge, without the most remote idea of submitting them to the eye of the public. The rapid increase of the Class, together with the number and variety of the exercises required by the General Synod from their students every session, soon rendered it inconvenient to continue them; and it occurred to him, that in this form, his prelections might still be useful to those for whom they were originally composed, and not unacceptable to the friends of the Bible in general.

FROM the well-earned fame of his predecessors in this department of sacred literature, particularly of Mr HARMER and Mr BURDER, he feels not the least inclination to detract; on the contrary, he rejoices in their success, and in the approbation which their writings have obtained from a discerning public. Much as their learning and industry have accomplished, he still thought the subject was not exhausted, and that a better plan than either of

them had followed, might be adopted. He has freely availed himself of their labours ; but not, he trusts, in a slavish manner. All the authorities quoted, as well by these writers, as by Mr TAYLOR, in his edition of CALMET, which he had access to, have been carefully examined, besides a number of works which they have overlooked, or which have been published since they wrote. Claiming the same right to think for himself which he cordially allows to his neighbour, the writer has expressed his opinions freely, even when they happened to differ from their sentiments ; but he has never to his knowledge, departed from the language of candour and respect.

THE only object which the Author proposed to himself in composing this work, was to illustrate the holy Scriptures ; he has therefore uniformly and studiously rejected every particular in Oriental Geography, Natural History, Customs, and Manners, how curious and interesting soever, that was not subservient to his design. His statements in all the three divisions, may be deemed very defective ; and had he proposed to give a complete view of these important subjects, they would certainly have been so ; but they are sufficiently complete for his purpose. Nor did his plan admit of describing every place, or plant, or custom, whose name occurs, or to which allusion is made by the sacred Writers ; it embraced those only that are connected with the exposition of some important passage, or that contribute to the general elucidation of the Scriptures. This will account for the numerous omissions, particularly under the heads of Geography and Natural History, which the intelligent reader will observe in his progress.

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PART I.

OF THE

GEOGRAPHY OF THE EAST.

VOL. I.

B

ILLUSTRATIONS

OF

SCRIPTURE,

IN THREE PARTS, &c.

INTRODUCTION.

THE physical and moral circumstances of the East, in what light soever we view them, have powerful claims upon the attention of every liberal and inquisitive mind. Placed under the vertical rays of the sun—illumined and influenced by other constellations than those which adorn our skies—inhabited by races of men, whose external appearance and modes of thinking almost tempt us to consider them as belonging to a different creation,—the oriental regions exhibit a scene equally new and interesting. The great variety of vegetable and animal forms which they present to our notice, so different from those that enrich our fields and tenant our deserts, awaken curiosity and stimulate research. Even the distance to which they are removed from us on the surface of the globe, throws over them a sort of awful obscurity, which deepens the interest we naturally feel in contemplating the works of almighty power, and the productions of human skill and industry.

But those parts of the world are, besides, connected with events of the most extraordinary character, and the most comprehensive influence. The Spirit of inspiration directs us to seek within their limits, the native country of the first pair, and the chosen abode of innocence and peace. In those fertile regions, the grand adversary of the human race accomplished their ruin by the introduction of sin, and endeavoured to countervail the loss of heaven, by establishing his throne of darkness below. It was there Divine Justice commenced the work of judgment on earth, by condemning the serpent to go upon his belly, and feed on dust,—and man, who had weakly suffered himself to be seduced from his duty, after a few years of painful exertion, to return to the dust from whence he came; while Divine Mercy began to unfold the scheme of redemption, which infinite Wisdom had contrived in the counsels of peace before the foundation of the world.

The orientals first displayed the powerful and various energies of the human mind; first cultivated the social affections, and formed themselves into civil communities for their mutual benefit; or listened to the solicitations of the turbulent passions, and engaged in the work of mutual destruction. Placed in the most favourable circumstances for scientific observations, they led the way in the acquisition of knowledge, which at once enlightened and corrupted the mind; and by a diligent and persevering application to the mechanical and liberal arts, ameliorated the condition of our family, by their numerous and invaluable productions. Almost every district exhibits the memorial of some great exploit; almost every town and village recalls the remembrance of some important or singular occurrence. These are circumstances, that can scarcely fail to direct the eye of the man of letters, the student of human nature, and the Christian philanthropist, to the East.

But another consideration may be mentioned, which, in point of weight and attraction, is not, perhaps, inferior to any

of these. In those distant countries, inspired prophets committed to writing the revelations of Heaven, for the instruction and reformation of the human kind. Although supernaturally directed by the Spirit of God, they followed in some degree the bent of their own genius, and the influence of their own taste. They not only wrote in the vernacular language of the country where they lived; but also made use of the terms and modes of speech that were familiar among the people, and suited to persons of every station and capacity, and employed those tropes and figures, which the glowing imagination of an oriental furnishes in the richest abundance and variety. But they borrowed their figures from scenery of a peculiar kind: they alluded to phenomena in the heavens and on the earth, of which we can form almost no conception from the state of nature around us; and to a variety of birds of singular appearance and habits, that never visited our sky; and to many terrestrial animals, which neither occupy our fields nor infest our rivers. They connect the events which they record, and the predictions which they utter, with places whose history is unknown to the rest of the world. This, it must be admitted, throws a shade of obscurity over the pages of inspiration, which it is the duty, as it is the interest of the biblical student, to remove. To understand the meaning of many passages in the sacred records; to discern the force and beauty of the language in which they are clothed, and the admirable propriety and significance of their allusions; in one word, to derive all the advantage from the sacred volume which it is calculated and intended to bestow,—we must render ourselves familiar with the physical and moral condition of the countries where it was written; we must examine the Geographical situation of Canaan and the surrounding states, ascertain the site of their principal towns and cities, and acquire some knowledge of their history: to this must be added, a suitable acquaintance with the Natural History of the East, and with the Customs

and Manners of its Inhabitants. In prosecuting this plan, it is only proposed to give the reader a rapid sketch of

SACRED GEOGRAPHY.

CHAP. I.

THE GARDEN OF EDEN—THE LAND OF NOD—AND THE CITY OF ENOCH.

A DESIRE to ascertain the site of the Terrestrial Paradise, is both natural and laudable. Planned by the infinite wisdom, and furnished by the exuberant goodness of Jehovah, it was the first proof of his kindness to man after his creation; and though no longer existing, the very name is fitted to excite a crowd of interesting reflections in every well-disposed mind. The investigation is undoubtedly attended with many difficulties; but these, it is hoped, are not insurmountable, and by consequence, they only stimulate the mind to active exertion, and hold out a more ample reward.

The universal deluge, certainly made a deep impression on the surface of our globe; but it could not materially change the great features of nature. That mighty agent might dissolve and level some hills and mountains of softer consistency,—might swallow up the waters of some minor streams, or give them a different direction,—might bury some extensive tracts of country, with all their habitations and improvements, in the bottom of the sea, and compensate for their destruction, by elevating submarine districts of equal extent into dry land; but the more solid parts of our earth must have remained as before that awful catastrophe. It is unreasonable to suppose, that the waters of the deluge, in the short space of one hun-

dred and fifty days, could melt the stupendous range of the Armenian or Gordiæan mountains, or give them a different position on the surface of the globe. When they retired, the torrents which, before that calamity, descended from the sides of those mountains to swell the magnificent streams of the Euphrates and the Tigris, must have resumed their ancient course, and poured their tributary waters into the same capacious channels. The language which the sacred writer employs when he speaks of the Euphrates, seems to confirm this remark. In his description of Paradise, he observes, "The fourth river is Euphrates;" and in the 15th chapter of the same book he mentions it again, but without any notice that it was a different stream, or that it had changed its course; on the contrary, he now uses the definite article, which he could not have done with propriety if it were not the same river. In the 18th verse he speaks of it again, in the very manner in which we commonly mention a thing already known; and in every other part of his writings where he mentions the Euphrates, he continues to use the same mode of speech. But it could not be his design to deceive the reader even in a point of minor importance; and if the antediluvian Euphrates was not the same with "that great river the river Euphrates," which he informs us watered the rich fields of Babylonia, he could not be ignorant of the fact. From this statement we think it is evident, that the surface of our globe has suffered no change by the deluge, which ought to discourage us from attempting to ascertain the real situation of the terrestrial Paradise.

The sacred historian has favoured us with only a few brief hints, in relation to the seat of primeval happiness. A more particular description, after the fall of man, had been attended with no real advantage; while the concise view which he has given, is well calculated to instruct mankind in the folly of seeking a place of rest or happiness on earth, in the propriety of regarding this world as a place of exile, and in the

imperious necessity of turning from the evanescent enjoyments of time, to the pure and imperishable pleasures of the heavenly Paradise.

The Garden of Eden was contrived by the wisdom, and planted by the hand of God himself, for the residence of the first pair; and, as its name imports, it was the centre of every terrestrial pleasure. The munificence of the Creator stored it with every plant, and flower, and tree, that was pleasant to the eye, grateful to the smell, and adapted to the sustenance of sinless man. A river went out of Eden to water it, whose ample and refreshing streams, so necessary to the very existence of an oriental garden, visiting every part of the sacred enclosure, diffused a perpetual verdure, and imparted to every plant a beauty, vigour, and fertility, perhaps unknown in any other district of that delightful region.

But though no doubt can be entertained of its being richly furnished with every pleasure suited to the intended abode of innocence and peace, we have no direct information where it was placed. The true situation of Paradise continues to be involved in much obscurity; and, perhaps, all we can hope to obtain from the most careful and well-directed investigation is, an approximation to the truth. The notices which the inspired writer has recorded, invite, rather than discourage, our researches, and promise a result destitute neither of pleasure nor advantage.

The Garden of Eden was situate, according to Moses, "eastward in Eden*." The Hebrew word Eden signifies pleasure or delight; and certainly intimates the superior beauty of the region that was known by that name. For the same reason it was, in succeeding ages, imposed as a proper name on several other places remarkable for the pleasantness of their situation, and the diversified richness of the scenery with which they were adorned.

To one of those fertile spots which, in the progress of

* Gen. ii. 8.

time, and in allusion to the garden of God, obtained the name of Eden, the prophet Amos directs our notice in these words : “ I will break also the bar of Damascus, and cut off the inhabitants from the plain of Aven, and him that holdeth the sceptre from the house of Eden *.” The place which, in the time of the prophet, bore this name, is supposed by the learned Huet and others, to be a deep valley situate between the mountains Libanus and Antilibanus, not far from Damascus, the metropolis of Syria. In this romantic and sequestered vale, the credulous natives believe the terrestrial Paradise was placed ; and proud of occupying the interesting spot where dwelt the father of the human family before the entrance of sin, they conduct the traveller to the place where Adam was created, to that where Cain murdered his brother, and to the tomb where the bones of Abel repose.

On the banks of the river Barrady, which runs along the bottom of the valley, between two steep rocky mountains, the kings of Syria had a magnificent palace, which they dignified with the name of Beth-Eden, or the house of pleasure. Several tall pillars were still standing when Mr Maundrell visited the place ; who, on a nearer view, found them part of the front of some ancient and very magnificent edifice, but of what kind he was unable to conjecture. These were probably the remains of the once sumptuous palace of Beth-Eden, whither the kings of Damascus often escaped from the restraints of a court, and the cares of state, to enjoy the pleasures of retirement and recreation. If these conjectures be well founded, the ruin of the Syrian king is, with great elegance and propriety, expressed by God’s cutting off him that holdeth the sceptre from Beth-Eden.

Several towns mentioned in Greek and Latin authors, bore the names of Adana, or Adena, which has been indisputably derived from the Hebrew term Eden. The town of Adena, in Cilicia, has been greatly celebrated for its charming situation,

* Amos i. 5.

and the extraordinary fruitfulness of the surrounding country. In Arabia, we find a port at the entrance of the Red Sea, named Aden, (a manifest abridgement of Adena) because it comprehended in it all the beauties of that region. The Arabians boasted of another town in the middle of the country, which also received the name of Aden for the same reason; and from these proper names, they believed that Paradise was situate in Arabia Felix.

Beside this Eden mentioned by the prophet, ancient geographers take notice of a village called Eden, near Tripoli in Syria, where some have placed the terrestrial Paradise. But to none of these places, will the marks of the garden described by Moses in the beginning of Genesis, apply. The inspired writer composed his history of the creation and fall of man, either in Egypt, or in the land of Midian; but Syria lies not to the east, but rather to the north of these countries; nor can Syria boast of a river, whose channel, in its progress to the ocean, is divided into four branches. We must, therefore, look for the true situation of Paradise in a different region.

The land of Eden, according to Moses, who is our surest guide in this investigation, lay on the banks of a large river, which, on leaving the borders of that country, was divided into four streams, called Pison, Gihon, Hiddekel, and Perath or Euphrates. To ascertain as nearly as possible, then, the true situation of Paradise, we must endeavour to find out and trace the course of these four celebrated streams. This will be the more easily done; as one of them still retains the name it bore in the time of Moses, and is familiarly known to both ancient and modern geographers. But I shall follow the example of other writers on the subject, and take them in the order of the sacred historian.

The first river mentioned by Moses, is the Pison, which, he informs us, "compasseth the whole land of Havilah." But it appears, from another passage in his writings, that Havilah is a part of the country inhabited by the posterity of Ishmael;

“And they dwelt from Havilah unto Shur, that is before Egypt*.” The inspired writer of the first book of Samuel mentions it again in these words: “Saul smote the Amalekites, from Havilah, until thou comest to Shur that is before Egypt†.” But Arabia is the country allotted to Ishmael and his descendants, where they have dwelt from the remotest ages, in the presence of all their brethren; and by consequence, Havilah must be situated near the Persian gulf. For “Shur which is before Egypt,” is the western extremity of Arabia, at the bottom of the Red Sea; as the following passage from the book of Exodus incontestibly proves: “Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur.” But Shur is opposed by the inspired writer to Havilah; and therefore the latter must be the eastern extremity of Arabia, or that part of the country which borders on the Persian gulf.

But Moses assures us, that Havilah which was refreshed by the waters of the Pison, was distinguished by its fine gold, bdellium, and onyx-stones: and the same valuable products formerly abounded in the eastern extremity of Arabia. Both inspired and profane authors commend the gold of that country. Diodorus says in several parts of his works, that in Arabia was found natural gold of so lively a colour, that it very much resembled the brightness of fire; and so fixed, that it wanted neither fire nor refining to purify it. To this country Ezekiel also alludes in his address to the city of Tyre: “The merchants of Sheba and Raamah, they were thy merchants; they traded in thy fairs with the chief of all spices, and with all precious stones and gold. Haran, and Canneh, and Eden, the merchants of Sheba, Ashur, and Chilmad, were thy merchants,” &c ‡. In this passage, the prophet expressly mentions Eden as a country abounding in gold and other precious commodities, and its inhabitants as carrying on an extensive traffic in these valuable articles, with the most

* Gen. xxv. 12.

† 1 Sam. xv. 7.

‡ Ezek. xxvii. 22.

celebrated commercial city of the ancient world. But if Havilah was not a district of the country which bore the name of Eden, it certainly lay in its immediate neighbourhood, and by consequence possessed the same products, and shared in the same trade. This is confirmed by Diodorus, who asserts that Arabia, of which it has been proved Havilah was a part, was formerly celebrated for its pure and native gold.

The next distinctive character of this country, is its possessing the bdellium. The original Hebrew term *Bedolach*, is variously translated by interpreters. Of the many opinions which have divided the sentiments of learned and inquisitive men, the most probable are, that it is an aromatic gum, or the pearl. The last of these opinions is entitled to the preference; for Moses, describing the manna, says, that it was like the seed of coriander, and the colour thereof as the colour of bdellium, Num. xi. 7. But we know from another passage in his writings*, that the manna was white; which corresponds with the colour of the pearl. But neither the round shape of the coriander seed, which is equally the figure of the pearl, nor the white colour of the manna, corresponds with the aromatic gum which has received the name of bdellium. The Talmudists accordingly observe on the description which Moses has given of the manna, that it was of the colour of pearls†. But without entering into this dispute, it is sufficient to observe, that whether the Hebrew word *Bedolach* be taken for pearls, or for an aromatic gum of that name, both are to be found in the land of Havilah‡.

The Persian gulf, and particularly that part of it which washes the shores of Havilah, produces finer pearls, and in greater abundance, than any other place in the world. Many writers of the highest reputation might be quoted in support of this assertion; but the authority of Pliny and Arrian is sufficient. The former, having commended the pearls of the

* Exod. xvi. 14, 31.

† Bochart.

‡ Well's Historical Geography, vol. I. p. 9, 10.

Indian seas, adds, that such as are fished towards Arabia in the Persian gulf, are most to be praised; and the latter sets a greater value on the pearls of Arabia, than upon those of the Indies.

If by bdellium we understand an aromatic gum, products of this kind have also been found in Arabia. Dioscorides expressly asserts it; and he sets a greater value upon the bdellium of the Saracens, than upon the bdellium of the Indies. And Galen, comparing the bdellium of Arabia with that of the Indies, gives the preference in several respects to the former. Pliny prefers the bdellium of Bactriana to that of Arabia; but he values the bdellium of Arabia above all the rest*. So abundant were the spices and drugs of Arabia, that Arrian says, the natives of that country carried on an extensive and lucrative commerce in these precious commodities, with the city of Diridotis, which is the same with Teredon, the ruins of which are still to be seen on the confines of Havilah. But though it could not be shewn, that these precious spices were the native products of that part of Arabia, yet, as the caravans from the interior passed through it on their way to Diridotis, in its immediate neighbourhood, to dispose of their merchandise, the language of Moses is justified, and the true situation of Havilah ascertained.

The last distinguishing mark of Havilah mentioned by the sacred historian, is the onyx-stone. To what particular stone the Hebrew term Schoham refers, cannot be ascertained with any degree of certainty; but that Arabia did abound in precious stones of different kinds, is expressly stated by both sacred and profane writers. The prophet Ezekiel mentions precious stones among the articles of commerce which the inhabitants of Sheba and Raamah, places on the eastern coast of Arabia, not far from Havilah, brought to the markets of Tyre. Both Strabo and Diodorus assert, that the riches of Arabia consisted in precious stones and excellent perfumes; and Pliny

* Well's Hist. Geog. vol. I. p. 9, 10.

assures us, that the most precious gems came from that country. But if we confine the Hebrew word Schoham to denote the onyx-stone, the distinctive character is still equally applicable to Arabia; for Pliny says, the ancients are persuaded that the onyx-stone was no where else to be found but in the mountains of that country.

From this statement it appears, that in the eastern extremity of Arabia, was situated a country called Havilah, abounding in fine gold, in pearls, in aromatic gums, and in precious stones, among which the onyx held a conspicuous place. Now this country, Moses informs us, was encompassed by the river Pison; and on inspecting the maps both of ancient and modern geographers, we discover a stream washing in its winding course, one side of that celebrated region; and also communicating with three other rivers by one common channel. We have thus obtained all the marks by which the inspired historian distinguished the Pison, and have therefore a right to conclude, that the western channel of the Euphrates, is the Pison of the sacred Scriptures.

The name of the second river is Gihon, concerning which Moses says, "The same is it which compasseth the whole land of Cush." As the Gihon cannot be at any great distance from the river Pison, a kindred stream, we must look for the land of Cush, not on the borders of Ethiopia and Egypt, but near the country of Havilah. And here we do find a country, watered by the eastern branch of the Euphrates, which has borne the name of Cush, from the remotest antiquity to the present times. All travellers inform us, that Suziana is now called Chuzestan; in which it is easy to discern the original term Cush, or as it is written by some, Chus or Chuz. Benjamin of Navarre says, that the great province of Elam, of which Susa is the metropolis, and which the Tigris waters, bears this name. This province, the same with Elymais, extends as far as the Persian gulf, east from the mouth of the Euphrates. This region is the Cuthah of the sacred Scrip-

tures, from which Salmanassar transported a colony to re-people the desolated country of the ten tribes. The colony long retained their ancient name, and were called Cutheans. As the Chaldeans often change sh into t or th, the words Cuthah and Cuth, are only the Chaldee form of Cusha and Cush. The word Shushan, the name which the prophet gives to the capital of Elam, is evidently derived from the same root*. We have thus sufficient evidence, that a province of the Babylonish empire, extending to the Persian gulf, east from the mouth of the Euphrates, was formerly called Cush; and therefore, the river which washes it, must be the Gihon of Moses.

The name of the third river is Hiddekel. That this river is the same with the Tigris, is generally believed. The Seventy Interpreters render the Hebrew word Hiddekel, the Tigris; which is only the original word in a different form. For, "taking away the aspiration of the word Hiddekel, the word Dekel remained; which the Syrians disguised, and made Diklat out of it: Josephus and the Chaldean paraphrasts, the Arabians and the Persians, turned it into Diglath; other modern orientals into Degil and Degola; Pliny, or those who informed him, into Diglito; and the Greeks, who gave to all strange words the turn and genius of their own tongue, instead of Diglis called it Tigris; induced probably so to do by the information they had received of the swiftness of this river, which was aptly denoted by the name Tigris†."

Of this river, Moses says; "That is it which goes before Assyria." The term Assyria in the days of Moses, and long after his time, was the designation, not of the Assyrian empire which consisted of many extensive provinces, but of that single province of which Nineveh was the capital. Moses, therefore, must have used the term in this limited application; and in this view, the course of the Tigris exactly corresponds with the description which the sacred historian gives of the Hiddekel. A traveller from Egypt or Midian, where Moses wrote,

* Dan, viii. 2.

† Well's Geog. vol. 1. p. 17.

could not enter Assyria without first crossing the Tigris, which, running before or on that side of Assyria, separated that province from the regions which lay next to those countries. This view may be thought inconsistent with the description of the inspired writer, which, in our translation is rendered, "That is it which goes toward the east of Assyria;" or, as it is in the margin, eastward to Assyria. But the original term which our translators render eastward, comes from a root which refers equally to time and place, signifying literally to go before; the noun itself signifies priority of place or situation, and therefore, cannot with propriety be restrained to the eastern side. It is accordingly rendered in the Septuagint, in the Vulgate, and in the Syriac version, over against, or along the side of Assyria; in which they have been followed by some of the most celebrated Hebrew scholars in modern times.

The last of the four rivers is the Euphrates. This noble stream, rolling his majestic and ample waters through the neighbouring countries, was familiarly known to the nations for whom the inspired historian wrote, without any mark of distinction. Moses calls this river Perath, which the Greeks, adjusting it in their usual manner to their own language, turned into Euphrates.

The sacred text speaks of only one river which watered the land of Eden; which, after leaving its boundary, was parted into four streams. This account perfectly corresponds with the course of these rivers which we have now been tracing. For the Euphrates and the Tigris unite their waters, and after flowing together in one channel for a considerable way, separate again into two channels, the one which we have shewn to be the Pison taking a westerly, and the other which is the Gihon, an easterly direction.

From this statement, it is easy to ascertain the true situation of the land of Eden, where the garden of Paradise was placed. The words of Moses clearly shew, that it lay on the

single channel which was common to all the four rivers. For, says the historian, "A river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence, it was parted and became into four heads." Within the limits of Eden, the river flowed in only one channel; but from thence, or beyond Eden, it was parted and became four heads*.

It has been contended by some writers, that the four heads cannot with any propriety be understood of four streams into which the river of Eden was divided, but of the four sources from which it issued; and, that these four streams united their waters immediately before they entered the country of Eden, and pursued their course in one majestic flood to the Persian gulf: for the word which is translated head, naturally refers to the beginning, not to any changes in the progress of a river. But admitting, that the term head properly means the source or commencement of a river, it is not inconsistent with the view which has been now taken. To a person ascending the river, the point where the Euphrates and Tigris united their streams, is in reality, the beginning or entry of each of these rivers; and on the contrary, the point of separation is the head or beginning of the Pison and the Gihon. The Seventy interpreters certainly admit this solution; for they render the original term *אֵלֶּיךָ*, beginnings. But another solution still more natural and satisfactory may be offered. The original term often signifies chief, principal, or most excellent; and by consequence, the words of Moses may be rendered, From thence it was divided into four principal channels, four noble rivers, excluding as unworthy of particular notice, other inferior streams which might branch off in their progress to the ocean.

These observations clearly prove, that the country of Eden, where the terrestrial Paradise was situated, lay on both sides of the single river formed by the united streams of the Tigris and Euphrates. Other considerations in support of this fact

* See Dr Well's *Hist. Geog.* in loc.

might be added; but these the brevity which our plan requires, forbids us to mention. It necessarily follows, that the garden planted by the hand of God for the residence of our first father, lay on the same river; for the historian expressly affirms, that a river, or single stream, went out of Eden and watered the garden.

It is added in the sacred text, that Paradise was situated eastward in Eden. It could not be the design of Moses, after stating so precisely, that the garden was planted among the rivers of Babylon, to inform his people, that it lay toward the east from Midian or the promised land; for of this they could not now be ignorant. His intention certainly was, to point out that part of Eden which had been honoured with the seat of primeval innocence; to intimate, that it lay in the easterly part of that highly favoured country, and by consequence, since "the river which watered it ran through that province before it entered Paradise," on one of the great turnings of this river from west to east; and, in the opinion of Dr Wells, at the easterly end of the southerly branch of the lowest great turning, taken notice of in Ptolomy, and expressed in the map belonging to his Geography*.

The primitive idea of the terrestrial Paradise was long present to the imagination, and dear to the heart of the oriental nations. It was the pattern of those curious gardens, which their nobles and princes caused to be fabricated of the most precious materials, and at a vast expense; the costly memorials of departed innocence. Such was that garden of pure gold, valued at five hundred talents, which Aristobulus king of the Jews presented to Pompey, and which the Roman general afterwards carried in triumph, and consecrated to Jupiter in the capitol. The garden of Eden seems also to have been the prototype of those gardens of delight, consecrated to Adonis, which the Assyrians and other nations in the east planted in earthen vessels, and

* Well's Hist. Geog. vol. i. p. 24.

silver baskets, in order to adorn their houses, and swell the pomp and splendor of their public processions. It furnished the enraptured poets of Greece and Rome with the never fading verdure, the perpetual bloom, and the fruits of burnished gold, with which their glowing imaginations clothed the Fortunate Isles, or enriched the garden of the Hesperides.

Adjoining to the land of Eden, lay the country of Nod, the place of Cain's exile, and the scene of his wanderings. Unable to bear the presence of his father, whom he had so deeply injured and so grievously afflicted; stimulated by the accusations and forebodings of his own guilty conscience; and required, it is probable, by an express mandate from Heaven,—he forsook the fruitful and pleasant fields of Eden, which he had polluted with a brother's blood, and directed his course to the neighbouring desert. Here he endeavoured to forget the agonies of remorse in the engagements of active life; and to secure himself and his family from the dreaded resentment of his irritated brethren, he built a city; and yielding to the dictates of parental affection, called it after the name of his son Enoch. It is extremely probable that the term Nod, derived from a Hebrew verb which signifies to wander, was not the proper name of the country, but only an appellative, denoting a fugitive or vagabond, in allusion to the wandering life which Cain was doomed to lead during the residue of his days.

The true situation of Nod is also involved in much obscurity; and various are the opinions entertained concerning it. The celebrated Huetius has observed, that Ptolomy, in the description of Susiana, places there a city called Anuchtha, and that, by cutting off the final syllable tha, a common termination of feminine nouns in Chaldee, it becomes Anuch, which is evidently the same with Enoch, the city of Cain. That this is the city of Enoch mentioned by Moses, he thinks is further confirmed by the position that ancient geographer has given it on the east of Eden; corresponding exactly with the situation which Moses assigns to the land of Nod, where

the city of Enoch was built. But this opinion is encumbered with very serious difficulties.

It is extremely improbable that the city of Enoch which Cain built, was able to resist the shock of the deluge. Like the garden of Paradise, it was certainly swept from the face of the earth, without leaving a single vestige behind to mark the spot where it once stood. But though it were admitted that the city of Anuchtha is the city of Enoch, it will not follow that it was the city built by Cain; for the inspired writer mentions another person of that name, the son of Jared, and father of Methuselah, so remarkable for religion, that God, as a signal reward to him, and an encouragement to others, translated him to heaven, without subjecting him to the common lot of our fallen nature. From which of these persons the city of Anuchtha might take its name, cannot now be determined. The probability is, that it derived its name from neither, but was built in honour of some person who bore the name of Enoch in ages long posterior.

Huetius observes, in support of his opinion, that the city of Anuchtha is placed by Ptolomy on the east of Eden; which agrees with the situation assigned to the land of Nod, in the sacred Scriptures*. In answer to this argument, it has been said, "That the word there rendered on the east, is the very same which is also rendered by some after the same manner in the description Moses gives of the course of the Hiddekel, or Tigris; which interpretation, as the learned Huetius rejects in that place relating to the river Hiddekel, so he should likewise reject in this place relating to the land of Nod; because it may be fairly presumed, that Moses used the word in the same sense in both places†." But this reasoning is not satisfactory; for it is by no means uncommon for a writer to use the same term in different senses. The original term has various meanings, and must, on some occasions, be rendered by the phrase, *on the east*. An instance occurs in 1 Sam. xiii. 5., where it cannot, with any propriety, be rendered

* Gen. v. 16.

† Well's Geog. vol. 1. p. 26.

before, or *over against*, but must be rendered *on the east*. If Samuel wrote this book in Shiloh, where he ministered before the Lord, then Michmash was, in relation to him, not before or over against Bethaven, but on the other side of that town; for Shiloh belonged to Ephraim, and Bethaven to Judah; while Michmash, which belonged also to Judah, lay at a considerable distance to the eastward. Supposing, what is more probable, that the prophet wrote his memoirs in Ramah, the place of his usual residence, still Michmash, in relation to him, was not before, or over against Bethaven. Hence, in that passage, the original term must be rendered *eastward*; which indicates the real situation of Michmash, in relation to the prophet at Ramah. To say that one place is before, or over against another, seems to express nearness not less than opposition. It is for this reason, that the word used by Moses in his description of the Hiddekel, is properly rendered *before* or *over against* Assyria, because it actually washed the borders of that country. It does not then follow that, because it is rendered before in one place, it must be so rendered in every place where it happens to occur.

The opinion of Huetius indeed seems to be ill founded; but the principal argument against it, is to be found in the character of the country to which Cain was doomed to retire. "And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand. When thou tillest the ground it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth." These words, addressed by the Judge of all the earth to the blood-stained criminal, certainly refer not to the fertile regions that, except toward the west, encircled the land of Eden, but to some barren and ungrateful soil, from which his utmost exertions should scarcely procure him a scanty subsistence. It was not then in the pleasant and fruitful country of Susiana, where Ptolomy places the city of Anuchtha, that the fratricide was compelled to wander, but in the thirsty and sterile deserts of

Arabia Petræa, a region admirably adapted to the purposes of punishment or correction. This part of Arabia extends to the western boundary of Eden, and by consequence, in relation to the place where Moses resided, is strictly and properly before or over against it; which greatly corroborates the opinion, first suggested by Grotius, that those frightful deserts received the condemned fugitive.

These circumstances considered, it is probable, that the land of Nod was situated some where in the eastern extremity of Arabia Petræa, extending its border to the western limits of Eden. But no traces of the name are now to be found to guide the researches, and reward the labour of the enquirer.

CHAP. II

THE MOUNTAINS OF ARARAT, UPON WHICH THE ARK OF NOAH RESTED.

IN what country these mountains are situated, and on what part of them the ark rested, are the objects of our present inquiry. From Bochart we learn, that the Sibylline oracles placed the mountains of Ararat in Phrygia, which cannot be reconciled with the statement of the inspired writer. That learned and indefatigable author, traces the mistake to the name of a city in Phrygia, Apamea Cibotus. The word Cibotus is of Greek origin, denoting in that language an ark. From this trifling circumstance, the pretended sibyl inferred, that the ark of Noah rested on an adjoining hill, and gave the surname of Cibotus to Apamea. But Bochart assigns a very different reason, that Apamea received the surname of Cibotus, because it was enclosed in the shape of an ark by three rivers. In like manner, he observes, the port of Alexandria was called Cibotus, from the bay by which it was nearly surrounded.

The true situation of Ararat must, therefore, be sought for in a different country.

The common opinion is, that Ararat is only another name for Armenia. The Vulgate, accordingly, has on Gen. viii. 4., the mountains of Armenia, for the mountains of Ararat. The Greek interpreters, and after them the Vulgate, render the word Ararat in 2 Kings xix. 37. in the same manner, and our translators have followed their example: "And it came to pass as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons, smote him with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Armenia."

But though it is the general opinion, that the ark rested on the mountains of Armenia, some writers contend, that the mountains of Ararat may extend beyond the limits of that country. The whole of that stupendous range of mountains, known to the ancients by the name of mount Taurus, which, beginning in the Lesser Asia, stretches as far as the East Indies, might very well be called by Moses the mountains of Ararat, because that was the first country of the Greater Asia through which they passed, and where they reached a much greater elevation than they had done before. If this view be just, the mountains of Ararat will extend as far as to mount Caucasus, in the confines of Tartary, Persia, and India*.

That part of Armenia on which the ark rested, is generally supposed, by the favourers of the first opinion, to have been the Gordiæan mountains, near the sources of the Tigris. In proof of this opinion, the ancients, who generally embraced it, assure us, that some remains of the ark were to be seen on those mountains so late as the days of Alexander the Great; that in the neighbourhood, was situated a town called Cemain or Themana, from the Hebrew word Shemen, which signifies *eight*, in allusion to the eight persons that were saved from the deluge; and that, the very place where Noah and his family went out of the ark, was distinguished by a name expressive of the

* See Dr Well's Hist Geog. vol. i. p. 30.

event. The following argument is quoted from a modern writer: "It is probably supposed, that Noah built the ark in the country of Eden, and since the deluge was not only caused by rains, but also by the overflowing of the ocean, as the Scripture tells us, Gen. vii. 11. that the fountains of the great deep were broken up; this overflowing which came from the Persian sea, running from the south, and meeting the ark, of course carried it away to the north towards the Gordiæan mountains. And the learned and ingenious Huetius has observed, that, considering the figure of the ark, which made it not so fit for speedy sailing, and also its heaviness, which made it draw much water, the space of an hundred and fifty days, which was the time the deluge lasted, was but a proportionable time for the moving of the ark from the place where it was made, to the Gordiæan mountains. So that both the situation of these mountains, in respect to the course of the waters of the deluge, and also its distance from the place where Noah lived and built the ark, do jointly conspire to render this hypothesis still more probable."

Those, on the other hand, who extend the mountains of Ararat beyond the confines of Armenia, fix on the summit of Caucasus as the place where the ark rested after the flood. The strongest argument in favour of this opinion, by the admission of some of its defenders, is founded on these words of Moses: "As they went from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there*." If then they came from the east, as the text plainly says, they might come from those parts of Asia on the south of Caucasus, which lie east of Shinar, though inclining to the north. But, say the defenders of this opinion, they could not possibly come from the Gordiæan mountains in the greater Armenia, which lie far to the north-west of Shinar. And they endeavour to strengthen their argument, by adding an old and constant tradition among the natives of the region near Caucasus, formerly

* Gen. xi. 2.

called Margiana, that a great vineyard in this country was of Noah's planting, after he had descended from the adjacent mountain. But admitting the existence of such a vineyard in Margiana, it cannot be proved that it was planted by the hands of Noah; for it is evident, that mere tradition, however old and constant, is no sufficient proof. Again, if we are to understand by the expression of Moses, "The fountains of the great deep were broken up," the overflowing of the sea, which is at least a very natural exposition, the Caspian must also have burst over its natural limits, and inundated the surrounding countries. But a current from that sea, meeting another from the Persian gulf, must have carried the ark toward the north-west, in a line directly opposite to the summits of Caucasus, and left it on the very spot where the defenders of the first hypothesis say it rested—on the mountains of Armenia. Or should it be said, that the current from the Caspian might be counteracted by another equally powerful from the north-east point of the Mediterranean, still it must have retarded the approach of the ark to the top of Caucasus, till the waters of the deluge subsiding, left it on some intervening ridge; and none can be named with so much probability as the Gordiæan mountains; for it is both agreeable to Scripture and reason to say, the ark rested on the highest part of the mountains of Ararat; and it is well known, that the Gordiæan chain are the loftiest mountains in Armenia.

But the strongest part of their argument remains, That the family of Noah travelled from the east to the plain of Shinar, which is directly south from the Gordiæan mountains. Even to this a satisfactory answer may be returned. It proceeds on the gratuitous supposition, that Noah and his family descended from the mountain on which the ark rested, into the plain of Shinar. That they continued for many years to occupy the summits of these mountains, is extremely probable. The plains and the valleys being reduced to a mire by the waters of the deluge, must have remained long incommodious

for the habitations of man. This must have been the case, particularly among the rivers of Babylon, where the plain of Shinar is situated, and where the progress of their settlements must have experienced an additional obstruction, from the extensive marshes and stagnant lakes that were left by the deluge. Nor were they under any necessity to descend precipitately into the plains. The region to which the wisdom of Providence had directed the ark, was admirably calculated to be the cradle of the postdiluvian world; it is fertile in the highest degree, adorned with the olive, the symbol of peace and safety, and abounding with every production necessary for the support of human life. On the sides of the hills and mountains which intersect this delightful country, the sons of Noah must have found a safe retreat, and the necessities of life for themselves and their families in sufficient abundance; and as it was natural for them to move towards the rising sun, they extended their settlements, or directed their journeys eastward, till they approached the confines of India. As the marshes and the lakes disappeared, and the face of the plains became dry and habitable, the Noachidæ might descend from the mountains in search of pasture for their flocks, and of more commodious habitations for themselves, at a great distance to the eastward from the land of Shinar; and pitching their tents, as did the patriarchs in after ages, and taking up their occasional residence in spots remarkable for their beauty, or recommended by the accommodation they afforded, they might at length, without any fixed purpose of settling in Shinar, reach these luxuriant and happy plains, where they determined to terminate their wanderings, and establish their permanent residence.

But, admitting that Noah and his family descended from the mountain on which the ark rested, near the sources of the Tigris, into the plain of Shinar, still it may be truly asserted in the words of the inspired historian, that they journeyed from the east. For it shall be shewn in the next chapter, that Shi-

nar stretched away to the north, along the western bank of the Tigris: and by consequence, Noah and his family no sooner descended into the level country, than they found themselves due east from the northern or upper parts of that plain. And therefore, as they journeyed along the foot of the mountains toward the upper part of Shinar, they literally journeyed from the east.

The learned Capellus considers Kedem as the name of a country, from Kedma the youngest son of Ismael; and interprets the words of the sacred writer in this manner: When the posterity of Noah had descended from the mountains of Armenia, into the region which afterwards received the name of Kedem, they found a plain in the land of Shinar.

Not satisfied with this conjecture, Bochart offers another. In his opinion the inspired writer adopts the common language of the Assyrians, who denominated all that part of their empire which was situated beyond the Tigris, the east, and the provinces on this side the west: the terms east and west being taken from that river, which flowing nearly from north to south, divided the Assyrian empire into almost two equal parts. The mountains of Ararat according to this division, may with propriety be said to belong to the east, as being a part of the empire which lay beyond the Tigris.

But a more satisfactory reply may be given, by a slight change in the translation. The original phrase (*Mikedem*) evidently denotes in some parts of the Mosaic writings, not from the east, but, on the east side; and is so translated in our version. When God expelled our first parents from Paradise, Moses informs us, He placed at the east of the garden of Eden, that is, plainly on the east side, cherubims and a flaming sword*. In a subsequent chapter it is stated, that the patriarch Abraham removed from the plain of Moreh unto a mountain (*Mikedem*) on the east†. Hence the phrase in this passage may be translated; As they journeyed on the east side,

* Gen. iii. 24.

† Chap. xii. 8.

they found a plain in the land of Shinar. When the sons of Noah descended from the mountains, they entered the level country on the east side of the Tigris, and pursuing their journey along the same side of the river, arrived at the plain where they resolved to settle. Or if the words of Moses be supposed to refer more properly to the land of Shinar than to the river, it will be shewn that the Tigris washes the eastern border of that country; and therefore in journeying down the Tigris, they travelled on the east side of the valley. Viewing the sacred text in this light, it may be admitted, without injury or danger to the hypothesis which has been more generally received, that the plain of Shinar, in which the tower of Babel was afterwards built, lies directly south from the Gordiæan mountains: for the words of the inspired historian only mean, that the Noachidæ travelled along the east side of the country, till they found a plain in its southern extremity, where they resolved to settle. These observations render it extremely probable, that the ark rested on the mountains of Ararat, within the limits of Armenia, and on one of the summits of the Gordiæan range, which rising to a stupendous height above the rest of the chain, overlook the rich and extensive plains of Babylonia.

The particular mountain of the Gordiæan on which the ark rested, is generally supposed to be the Baris. Mr Bryant mentions another mountain of this name, in the range of mount Taurus, situated in Aderbijan, in Persia: and we learn from other authorities, that the inhabitants have an ancient tradition that the ark rested there*: and that hard by is another village, where they suppose the wife of Noah to have died†. The learned analyst, however, only mentions the notion to overthrow it, by adding, that “wherever the arkite rites were instituted, the same names were given to different places, Baris, Mene, Selene; that the particular name of Da Moan, the village at the foot of it, is understood by the natives in the sense of the second plantation; and that these circumstances only shew, how uni-

* Herbert's Trav.

† Tavernier.

versally diffused through the ancient world was the tradition of the Mosaic ark, and the general deluge."

Having ascertained the spot where the ark rested after the deluge, we are prepared to form a probable conjecture concerning the place where Noah lived, anterior to that great calamity ; and where by the command of heaven he built the ark. Though Adam and Eve were driven out of Paradise, no hint is given in the sacred Scriptures of their being commanded to relinquish the country of Eden. It is therefore natural to suppose, that the first generations of men settled in that region, and in the countries around. That Noah had his residence in the neighbourhood of Paradise, may be inferred from his being the lineal descendant of them, who, after the condemnation and banishment of Cain, succeeded to all the rights and privileges of the first born, and by consequence to the family inheritance, on the death of Adam. From the conduct of Abraham to the sons of Keturah, it seems to have been the practice in the patriarchal ages as in modern times, derived, it is probable, from the arrangements of Adam in his family, to send away the younger branches with a certain allotted portion, to form settlements for themselves, while the inheritance was reserved for the eldest son. If this remark be just, then Noah must have remained with Adam and Seth in the country of Eden, and succeeded to the inheritance after their decease. This is further confirmed by the ark resting on the mountains of Ararat, which were at no great distance from Babylonia ; for it is by no means probable, that so large a vessel, of a form by no means adapted to sailing, and so deeply loaded, could perform a voyage of great length. But, whatever might be the distance it floated, its motion was towards the north ; because the inundation by which Assyria and the Gordiæan mountains were submerged, rushed in from the south, the Persian gulf, and the Indian ocean ; and because their heaviest rains are wafted on the wings of the humid south wind. This opinion is also confirmed from the testimonies of ancient writers, who assert, on the authority of

certain public records deposited in a city of Mesopotamia, that Sisuthrus, who is no other than Noah, sailed from Assyria into Armenia.

The species of wood of which the ark was fabricated, strongly corroborates the opinion that Noah lived before the flood, in the country of Eden. It is called, in Scripture, Gopher wood*. Fuller rightly conjectures, from the word itself, that it is the cypress. The Greek word for cypress, is *κυπαρισσος*; take away the termination, and *κυπαρ* remains, which has all the radical letters of the word Gopher, and differs but little from it in sound. Nor is any sort of wood more durable and lasting than the cypress. Thucydides informs us, in his second book, that for this reason the Athenians deposited in coffins of cypress wood, the bones of those who had fallen in the wars of their country. And the Scholiast observes upon the place, that these boxes, or coffins, were made of cypress, because it was not liable to rot†. It is extremely probable, that the ark of Noah was built of the same durable material; for it is asserted, by a great number of ancient writers, that some relics of it remained for several thousand years after the deluge. The learned and indefatigable Bochart also proves, by the testimony of Plato, Plutarch, and other writers, that the cypress wood is not only durable, but also fit for shipping; and that it abounds in Babylonia, and the surrounding countries. Hence, he informs us from Arrian, that the fleet which Alexander ordered to be built at Babylon, was all constructed of cypress wood; because the country produced few other trees fit for that purpose. But it has been already shewn that the country of Eden lay on both sides of the river, formed by the united streams of the Euphrates and the Tigris; and, therefore, partly within the limits of Babylonia. Noah, therefore, lived in Eden before the flood, and there built the ark of gopher, or cypress wood, with which that country abounds.

* Gen. vi. 14.

† Bochart.

CHAP. III.

THE LAND OF SHINAR, AND THE CITY AND TOWER OF BABEL.

THE land of Shinar is that beautiful valley through which the rapid Tigris rushes from the mountains of Armenia to the sea.

That this assertion is not lightly hazarded, will appear from the testimony of ancient writers, both sacred and profane. The prophet Isaiah mentions Shinar as one of the countries to which his people were carried captive; and by connecting it with Cush and Elam, seems to intimate that it was situated in their neighbourhood: "The Lord shall set his hand again the second time, to recover the remnant of his people—from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar*." So convinced were the Seventy interpreters of this, that they render the term Shinar in this, and other passages, by the word Babylonia. In several parts of Scripture, Shinar is expressly called Babel. "The beginning of Nimrod's empire was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar†." The tower of Babel was, according to Moses, built in the same country‡; and it received that name, "Because the Lord did there confound the language of the whole earth." It is a fact which cannot be disputed, that the capital of Nebuchadnezzar's empire was the renowned city of Babylon; and the prophet Daniel asserts, in explicit terms, that it was situated in the land of Shinar. "In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem, and besieged it: and the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah, into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God, which he carried into the land of Shinar, to the house of his god." From these quotations, it is indisputable, that the land of Shinar is the same country which afterwards received the name of Babylonia. The fact is confirmed by the testi-

* Is. xi. 11.

† Gen. x. 10.

‡ Ch. xi. 2, 4, 9.

mony of uninspired authors. Abydenes, as quoted by Eusebius, observes, That Nebuchadnezzar having finished the Syrian war, magnificently adorned the temple of Belus with the spoils of the conquered nations. The same writer has preserved a fragment of Milesius, the ancient historian of Phenicia, in which he asserts that Shinar belonged to Babylonia.

The term Shinar, by changing the Hebrew letter Ain into g, may be pronounced Shingar. Hence, many are persuaded, that Shinar is the same country that was known to the ancients, by the names Singara and Singarena. Pliny and other writers, mention the city of Singara in Mesopotamia, not far from the Tigris; Sextus Rufus, the region of Singarena in the same country; and Ptolomy, the mountain Singaras*. It is therefore extremely probable, that to the land of Shinar, belonged the whole country along the west bank of the Tigris, as far as the mountains of Armenia. In the opinion of some writers, the land of Shinar probably included the whole valley on both sides of the river, from the mountains of Armenia to the Persian gulf, or at least, to the southern division of the common channel of the Tigris and Euphrates†. It is however certain, that it extended all along the western bank of that river.

Noah and his sons, probably formed their first settlement after the flood, near the bottom of the mountain on which the ark rested in the northern parts of Shinar; and here the venerable patriarch spent the remainder of his days. For we have not the least evidence, that he had any concern in the building of the city and tower of Babel. The piety of his character must have led him strenuously to oppose the daring attempt of his degenerate offspring; and to remain at a distance from the scene of their wickedness. To this proof of his continuing in the northern parts of Shinar, may be added, that Ptolomy mentions a city near the sources of the Tigris, under the name of Zama, which bears so great an affinity to

* Bochart.

† Well's Geog. vol. i. p. 32, &c.

Zem, or Shem, as to render it exceedingly probable, that Noah and his sons formed their first settlement near this place.

That the city of Zama derived its name from Shem, is evident from this consideration, that in the Arabic version, Shem is always called Sam or Zam*. Here the venerable father of the postdiluvian world, restored the worship of Jehovah, and for three hundred and fifty years, swayed the patriarchal sceptre over the virtuous part of his descendants. The rest of his sons, determined on the prosecution of their own presumptuous schemes, and unable to bear or to subdue his firm opposition, withdrew from his presence, and proceeding down the river, fixed on a particular place for their intended work, at a considerable distance from his residence.

So great was the impiety of these degenerate sons of Noah, and so regardless were they of the sure and awful proofs of the Divine jealousy, that they selected a spot within the limits of the land of Eden, and not far from the scene of the first transgression, for the renewal of that hostility with heaven which had cost their fathers so dear. They commenced their operations in the very place, or at least, in its immediate neighbourhood, where rose in future ages, the imperial city of Babylon; and by consequence, upon the original and natural stream of the Euphrates, at some distance from its confluence with the Tigris.

The time when the city and tower were built, may be inferred with sufficient certainty from these words of Moses; "And unto Eber were born two sons, the name of one was Peleg; for in his days was the earth divided." The meaning of the historian must be, that the earth was divided at the time Peleg was born; for the name was given at his birth, in allusion to the signal occurrence which had then recently happened. But the inspired writer informs us in another passage, that Peleg was born an hundred years after the flood†; therefore, in the same year, the building of the tower was in-

* Well's Geog. vol. 1.

† Gen. xi. 10—16.

terraptured, and the sons of Noah were scattered over the face of the earth.

The dispersion, however, affected only the irreligious part of Noah's family; for, as has been already remarked, it is not to be supposed that the patriarch himself, or Shem and others to whom the covenant was given, would engage in so wicked a scheme, or give it the sanction of their approbation. This idea receives great confirmation from the words of Moses, in which he characterizes the builders, "the children of men*;" for in the sixth chapter, the sons of God are opposed to the daughters of men, as believers in God to unbelievers. Moses, therefore, in using the term Adam, insinuates, that only the unbelieving part of Noah's family were engaged in that act of rebellion. But, if the venerable patriarch and his religious offspring took no part in the crime, they suffered no part of the punishment in which their impious relations were involved. While the speech of the latter was confounded, the former retained their native language in all its purity, and transmitted it by Shem, Arphaxad, and Sala, to Heber the ancestors of Abraham, the renowned founder of the Hebrew nation. This was no other than the language which the descendants of Heber, in the line of Abraham, continued to speak for many generations, and in which the sacred books of the Old Testament were written.

While the presumptuous builders of the city and tower of Babel were, in the righteous displeasure of God, scattered over the face of the earth, the patriarch and his adherents remained undisturbed in their original settlements; for Ur of the Chaldees, where the ancestors of Abram resided, was not far distant from the Gordiæan mountains on which the ark rested. Ammianus mentions a city of this name, situated in the eastern parts of Mesopotamia, between the river Tigris and the city of Nisibis, about an hundred miles from those stupendous mountains, where, as shall afterwards be shewn, the ancestors

* Gen. xi. 5. כְּנִי הָאָדָם

of Abraham certainly lived. To this may be added, the settlement of the sons of Shem, when the earth was divided, in Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Syria, of which the two first were the very countries where the ark rested, and Noah spent the remainder of his days. His descendants, therefore, in the line of Shem, were not like the builders of Babel, compelled to leave their dwellings in search of new settlements, but spread over the countries which they previously occupied; which was not a punishment inflicted upon them for a crime in which they had no share, but the natural result, under the secret direction of providence, of an increasing population.

The design of the tower with which the founders of Babylon proposed to adorn their infant city, was not, as some writers have strangely imagined, to open a way for themselves into the mansions of eternal felicity; for it can scarcely be supposed, that so extravagant an idea could enter their minds, depraved and presumptuous as they were, much less that it could ripen into a regular plan of operation. The words in which they couched their daring resolution, "Let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven," mean no more than a tower of extraordinary height. Such phrases may be found in every language; and their meaning can scarcely be misunderstood. When the messengers whom Moses employed to examine the land of Canaan, returned and made their report, they described the cities they had visited, as great and walled up to heaven: and Moses himself in his farewell address to the congregation, repeats it; "Hear, O Israel, thou art to pass over Jordan this day, to go in to possess nations greater and mightier than thyself, cities great and fenced up to heaven*." The meaning of these phrases plainly is, that the walls of these cities were uncommonly strong and lofty. That the builders of Babel meant no more, is further evident from the words of Jehovah, recorded by Moses. "Now nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do." It is here plainly admitted, that

* Deut. i. 28, and ix. 1.

the design was practicable, and had been accomplished, if God had not thought proper to interrupt their operations. But to build a tower, the top of which should actually reach unto heaven, is beyond the power of mortals. The opinion of Josephus is not much more reasonable; that the design of the inhabitants of Babel, was to raise a tower higher far than the summits of the loftiest mountains, to defend them from the waters of a second flood, of which they were afraid. Had this been their design, they would not have commenced their operations on the level plain, but on the top of Baris, where the ark rested. They had the solemn promise of Jehovah, that he would no more destroy the earth by water; and beheld the ratification of it in the radiant bow of heaven, placed in the cloud to quiet the fears of guilty mortals. If the Noachidæ had distrusted the promise and sign of heaven, they had not descended from the mountains, where only they could hope for safety from the strength and height of their tower, into the plains of Babylonia, and fixed their abode between two mighty rivers, to whose frequent inundations that province is exposed. Nor could they be so infatuated as to imagine, that a tower constructed of bricks, whether hardened in the sun, or burnt in the fire, could resist the waters of a general deluge, whose impetuous assault, as they must have well known, the strong barriers of nature could hardly endure. Equally inadmissible is the notion, that they constructed this tower to defend them from the general conflagration, of which they are supposed to have received some obscure and imperfect notices; for in the destruction of the world, who could hope to find safety in the recesses of a tower, or on the summit of the mountains? they would rather seek for refuge from the devouring element, in the profound caverns of the earth.

But it is vain to indulge in conjectures, when the true reason is clearly stated in the page of inspiration: "Let us build us a city and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the

whole earth *.” These words clearly shew, that their object in building the tower was, to transmit a name illustrious for sublime conception and bold undertaking, to succeeding generations. In this sense, the phrase, to make one’s self a name, is used in other parts of Scripture. Thus, “David gat him a name when he returned from smiting of the Syrians in the valley of salt †;” and the prophet informs us, that the God of Israel “led them by the right hand of Moses, with his glorious arm dividing the waters before them, to make himself an everlasting name ‡.” They seem also to have intended it as a beacon or rallying point, to their increasing and naturally diverging families, to prevent them from separating in the boundless wilderness into independent and hostile societies. This may be inferred from these words, in which they further explain the motive of their undertaking: “lest we be scattered abroad on the face of the whole earth.” They seem to have anticipated the necessity, and dreaded the consequences of dispersion; and, like all who seek to avert evil by unlawful means, they hastened, by the rash and impious measure they adopted, the very mischief which they sought to avoid. To build a city and a tower was certainly no crime; but to do this with a view merely to transmit an illustrious name to posterity, or to thwart the counsels of Heaven, was both foolish and wicked, and justly excited the displeasure of the supreme Judge, who requires his rational creatures to acknowledge and to glorify him in all their undertakings. Guilty of the same crime which procured the sudden dispersion of the first settlers at Babel, was the restorer of that great city, when he proudly boasted, “Is not this great Babylon which I have builded for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty§:” and he was instantly visited with a similar punishment, but proportioned to the greater enormity of his transgression; for the place should have reminded him of the sin and punishment of his forefathers, and taught him to guard against the pride and vanity of his heart.

* Gen. xi. 4.

† 2 Sam. viii. 13.

‡ Is. lxiii. 12.

§ Dan. iv. 30.

Nebuchadnezzar was, for his wickedness, driven from his throne and kingdom, to dwell with the beasts of the field, and eat grass like oxen, "till seven times passed over him;" till the sun had seven times passed over his appointed circuit, and he had learned "that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will." But his irreligious ancestors were punished with dispersion, by confounding their language. Till this memorable event, the inspired writer assures us, the whole earth was of one language and one speech. When Jehovah came down to see the tower which the Babylonians were building, he said, "Behold the people is one, and they have all one language." They formed one great society, and conversed in the tongue which they had learned from those who lived before the flood; and which was the only language spoken on earth from the beginning of the world: for no hint of any confusion of language, or even material diversity of speech, before the building of Babel, is given in the sacred volume. It is exceedingly natural to suppose, that the devout Seth, and his religious descendants, would preserve with care, the family tongue in which God conversed with their renowned father; in which the first promise was given to sinners, and many subsequent revelations were made. The language of our fathers is not easily changed, if we were so disposed; but no man is willing to change it; and a religious man will be yet more averse to relinquish a language which contains the only grounds of his hope, and that of the whole human race. We may therefore conclude, that since this language had so many claims on the affectionate care of Seth, he would certainly hand it down, with the gospel it contained, to his children, that they might teach it to succeeding generations, till it was received by his celebrated descendant Noah, the second father of our family. For the same reasons, which were daily receiving additional strength, Shem would preserve with pious care, the sacred deposit, till he delivered it into the hands of Abraham, with whom he lived

about two hundred years. The line of descent, by which the primitive language might be transmitted from Adam to Abraham, and from this patriarch to Moses, is short and straight; for between Adam and Noah were only eight persons, and the father of Noah was fifty-six years old when Adam died. The only interruption is the confusion of tongues, which happened after the flood. But though God confounded the speech of mankind at Babel, it is not said he extinguished the general language; nor that he confounded the speech of any but the colony at Babel. These only were in the transgression, and, therefore, these only were liable to the punishment. Noah, and the rest of his family, persevering in their dutiful obedience to God, undoubtedly retained their language, together with their ancient habitations.

It may be urged that, by the testimony of Moses, the Lord confounded at Babel, "the language of all the earth." But the plain of Shinar could, with no propriety, be called the whole earth; nor could the inhabitants of Shinar, by any figure of speech, be entitled to that name. If mankind were in possession of a great part of the globe when the tower was built, by what rule of justice could they be punished for a crime in which they had no share, and of which multitudes of the distant settlers could not even have heard? "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" The truth of this history depends upon two terms, which admit of different senses. In the first verse of the eleventh chapter of Genesis, the sacred historian says, The whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. The word (כָּל) *col*, signifies *the whole*, and also *every*; by (אֶרֶץ) *Arets*, is often meant *the earth*, it also signifies a *land* or *province*; and occurs frequently in this latter acceptance. In this very chapter, the region of Shinar is called Arets Shinar, the land or province of Shinar; and the land of Canaan, Arets Canaan, the country of Canaan. The psalmist uses both terms in precisely the same sense: "Their sound is gone

out into every land," Col Arets *. The words of Moses, then, ought to be rendered, Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of the whole land. If this view of the text be just, the dispersion was a partial event, and related chiefly to the sons of Cush, whose intention was to found a great, if not an universal empire; but by this judgment, their purpose was defeated. The language of the whole country, Mr Bryant thinks, was confounded, by causing a labial failure, so that the people could not articulate. It was not an aberration, in words or language, but a failure and incapacity in labial utterance; for God said, "Go to, let us go down and confound, הפפ, their lip, that they may not understand one another's speech." By this, their speech was confounded, but not altered; for, as soon as they separated, they recovered the true tenor of pronunciation; and the language of the earth continued, for some ages, nearly the same. This appears, from many interviews between the Hebrews, and other nations, in which they spoke without an interpreter. Thus, when Abraham left his native country to sojourn in the land of promise, he conversed with the natives in their own language, without difficulty, though they were the descendants of Canaan, who, for his transgression at Babel, was driven, by the Divine judgments, from the chosen residence of his family. The Hebrew language, indeed, seems to have been the vernacular tongue of all the nations in those parts of the world; for the patriarchs, and their descendants, so late as the days of Moses and Joshua, conversed familiarly with the inhabitants of Midian and Canaan, without the help of interpreters.

This argument receives an accession of strength, from the ideal character of the Hebrew language. It is admitted, that all languages participate more or less of the ideal character; but it is one of the most remarkable circumstances by which

* Ps. xix. 4.

the Hebrew is distinguished. A number of its words, as in other languages, are mere arbitrary signs of ideas; but, in general, they derive their origin from a very few terms, or roots, that are commonly expressive of some idea borrowed from external objects; from the human constitution; from our senses or our feelings. The names of men, and of the lower animals, and the names of many places, particularly in the remoter ages, allude to some remarkable character in the creature named; or, in reference to place, to some uncommon circumstance or event. Scarcely a proper name can be mentioned, which alludes not to something of this kind. To give a few examples: *Korè*, the partridge, received its name from the verb *Kara*, to call, in imitation of the note which that bird uses in calling its young. The camel is in Hebrew, *Gamal*, from a verb of the same form, which signifies to recompense, because that creature is remarkable for remembering and revenging an injury. The Hebrews call the scorpion *Akrab*, from two words which signify to kill one's father; now both Pliny and Aristotle inform us, that it is the character of that creature to destroy its own parents.

But these names were imposed by Adam before the fall; for the sacred historian explicitly states, "Whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof*." The verb *was* is not in the original text; and, therefore, the sentence may run in the present, with equal propriety as in the past; and, indeed, according to the genius of the language, with more propriety in the present—that is the name thereof. Hence the names by which the lower animals were known in the days of Moses, were those which Adam gave them in Paradise; and as these are pure Hebrew, the legitimate conclusion is, that Hebrew was the language spoken by Adam before the fall.

The names which men and things received at the beginning of time, are so strikingly similar to those which they bore when

* Gen. ii. 19.

Hebrew was certainly a living language, that its claim to the honour of being the primeval speech of the human family, can scarcely be rejected. It is ever reckoned a proof of similar origin, when many words in any two languages have the same form, the same sound, meaning and reason. But the names of the first generations of men, like those of the lower animals, are as pure Hebrew as the names of Peleg, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, or those of David and Solomon, or Malachi. They have the Hebrew form, are constructed according to Hebrew rules, are founded on certain reasons, like Hebrew names; and in fine, are not to be distinguished in any one respect from pure Hebrew.

It deserves also to be remarked, that the reason assigned for these names will not correspond with any other language. The garden of Paradise was called Eden; because among the Hebrews it signifies pleasure or delight. The place of Cain's exile was for this reason called the land of Nod, from a root which signifies to wander. Adam received this name, because he was taken out of the ground; but if the term for ground in the first language had been terra, or γη, or earth, there had been no propriety in the designation. Eve was called by this name, because she was the mother of all living: but it is derived from a pure Hebrew verb which signifies to live; and to this relation the name owes all its propriety and significance. Cain was named from the Hebrew verb Kana, to possess, because his mother had got him from the Lord; and in this instance also, the name is inseparably connected with the Hebrew root. The proper name Seth is derived from the Hebrew verb Shouth, to appoint; because, said our first mother, God hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel whom Cain slew*. The same mode of reasoning might be carried through all the names of the Adamitic age; but these instances are sufficient to shew the near affinity, if not the positive identity of the language which Adam spoke, with the Hebrew of the old testament.

* Gen. iv. 26.

The names ascribed by the inspired writer to the founders of our race, are not interpretations of primitive terms; for he declares they are the very names which were given at first: and as they are derivatives from pure Hebrew verbs, the language then spoken must have been the same in substance and structure. Had they been translations, we have reason to think the same method would have been followed as in several instances in the New Testament, where the original term is used, and the interpretation avowedly subjoined. But Moses gives not a single hint of his translating these terms: he asserts on the contrary, that they are the original words employed; and the truth of his assertion is rendered indubitable by the reasons assigned for their imposition, which are inseparably connected with the Hebrew language. Nor does Moses, in the whole course of his history, when speaking of the names of persons and places, utter a single word from which we can infer the existence of an earlier language.

When the minute and extensive acquaintance with the natural character and temper of the numerous animals to which our first father gave names in Paradise, which he certainly had not time to acquire by his own industry, and which we have no reason to believe he owed to intuition, is considered, we must admit, that the language in which he conversed was not his own contrivance, but the immediate gift of Heaven. When Jehovah breathed into Adam and Eve the breath of life, he inspired them in the same moment with the knowledge of the tongue in which they were to express their thoughts. A similar favour was bestowed at the beginning of the New Testament dispensation, on the apostles and other ministers of the gospel; who were inspired in a moment with the perfect knowledge of many different languages. The builders of Babel, as might have been expected, were visited in a very different manner. Theirs was partly an inspiration in anger, which, instead of the common language, imparted for a time a number of new and strange sounds, which none but those who received them could under-

stand. These new idioms or sounds, however, were not so numerous as the people assembled at Babel; for human society had then been completely at an end:—the father could not have associated with his child, nor the husband with the wife of his bosom: every individual, compelled to separate from the rest of the species, had taken up his solitary dwelling with the savage beast of the desert,—and the whole race, so far at least as it depended upon them, had speedily perished. It is therefore extremely probable, that every separate family had a peculiar dialect, or those families that were appointed to coalesce into one colony in their future dispersion.

How far the Noachidæ proceeded in building the city and tower before the confusion of tongues, cannot be certainly known. It is extremely probable, that the prodigious tower which stood in the middle of the temple dedicated to Belus, was the very same which was built there by Ham and his ambitious progeny. This is the more probable, because it is attested by several profane authors, that this tower was all constructed of bricks and bitumen; the same materials which, according to Moses, were used in building the tower of Babel. This astonishing structure, was, according to Herodotus, a furlong on each side at the base, and a furlong in height; on this another tower was built, and after this another, to the number of eight. If these eight towers, therefore, rose in the same proportion, the height of the whole building was eight furlongs or one mile. We read of no other structure ever executed by the hands of man, that reached the fourth part of this immense altitude. The ascent to the top, was by stairs winding round it on the outside; that is, says Rollin, there was perhaps an easy sloping ascent in the side of the outer wall, which, turning by very slow degrees in a spiral line, eight times round the tower from the bottom to the top, had the same appearance as if there had been eight towers placed upon one another. In these different stories were many large rooms, with arched roofs, supported by pillars. Over the whole, on the top of the

tower, was an observatory, by the benefit of which the Babylonians became more expert in astronomy than all other nations.*

The stupendous undertaking of the Noachidæ, to the progress of which, the God of heaven put an effectual stop by the confusion of tongues, was long remembered in the east. The war of the giants with Olympian Jove, so sweetly sung by the Roman poet, bears too striking a resemblance to be mistaken. In the hands of his muse, the sun-dried bricks of Shinar grew into solid and towering mountains, which men of gigantic size and daring ambition, with more than mortal strength, piled upon one another, in the vain and presumptuous hope of opening to themselves a way to the throne of the almighty Thunderer.

“ Neve foret terris securior arduus æther :
Affectasse ferunt regnum cœleste Gigantas
Alta que congestos struxisse ad sidera montes.
Tum Pater omnipotens misso perfregit Olympum
Fulmine et excussit subjecto Pelio Ossam.”

OVID.

CHAP. IV.

OF THE DISPERSION OF MANKIND.

THE confusion of tongues was followed by the dispersion of mankind over the face of all the earth. This great and interesting work, however, was conducted by the Sovereign Disposer of all things, in a regular and orderly manner. Under his watchful and secret direction, the men of Babel, baffled in their presumptuous designs, and disappointed in their sanguine ex-

* Rollin's Ancient Hist. vol. 2.

pectations of immortal fame, together with numerous bands from the other families of Noah, who had learned from the lips of their common father the express command of God, to multiply and replenish the earth, migrated to those quarters of the globe, and those countries which had been allotted in the Divine counsels for their respective settlements. To this orderly distribution, the inspired historian seems to allude in his concluding remark on the settlement of the sons of Javan: "By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations*." And for the same reason, he concludes the account he gives us of the other branches of Noah's family in similar terms. The words families and nations, are often used promiscuously in other parts of Scripture; but here they must have a distinct signification. The difference of construction plainly intimates, that families are in this connection subordinate to nations, as the parts of which nations are composed. The meaning of the sacred writer then, plainly is, that the sons of Noah were ranged according to their nations, and every nation was ranked by its families; so that every nation dwelt by itself, and in every nation the tribes, and in every tribe the families of which it consisted, received their separate lots and lived by themselves†. Thus the settlement of the Noachidæ after their dispersion at Babel, seems to have been conducted on the same principles, and in the same orderly manner, though not perhaps with all the formality, as that of the people of Israel long afterwards, in the land of Canaan.

The rule which the Divine Wisdom was pleased to follow in confounding their language, gives additional strength to this argument. The languages of the same branches had a nearer affinity to one another, than to those of any other branch of Noah's family. Those who spoke the same language naturally associated together; and those who received a kindred tongue, and by consequence understood a little of the former,

* Deut. xxxii. 8.

† Well's Hist. Geog. vol. 1. p. 60.

preferred their neighbourhood to that of a people with whose language they were totally unacquainted. Hence, the first planters settled as well after their tongues, as after their families, and after their nations. The nations of the dispersion, on leaving the plain of Shinar, turned, by the immediate suggestion of Heaven, to that quarter of the globe which had been allotted in the Divine purpose for their future residence; but the affinity of the languages, was perhaps the means which Jehovah employed to indicate the regions that were to be occupied by the subordinate branches of the general division. The unity of speech at Babel, which bound its inhabitants into one compact society, was extinguished, or more properly, suspended for a time; but the affinities observable among the numerous dialects, which the confusion of languages produced, still operated as a general principle of connection, in determining the relative situation of the different settlements.

Dr Wells has drawn another argument from the wisdom of the patriarchs, who were all alive at this division, and acted as kings in their generations. Considering the great difference of soil and temperature, in various regions of the earth, it was their part, he thinks, to prevent the contention among their sons, which such a difference might be naturally supposed to produce. This could be done only by instituting an orderly division; and that either by casting lots, or choosing according to the order of their birth-right, after taking some general survey of a sufficient portion of the earth, and laying down distinct portions according to the number of the nations, then of families, &c. But it is much to be questioned, whether the patriarchs, in such circumstances, were able to make themselves understood to numerous bodies of their descendants, who no longer spake the same language, or possessed sufficient authority over so daring and stubborn a race, to give effect to their decisions. The arrangement of the different settlements is rather to be ascribed to the immediate interposition of Heaven, who miraculously confounded the language of Ham

and his sons, and expelled them for their presumption from the land of Shinar, where they had determined to take up their final abode ; while he divided the families of Shem and Japhet into separate communities, and conducted them by immediate suggestions from above, towards the countries where he had appointed them to establish their permanent residence.

Of the three sons of Noah, Japhet was the first-born, though mentioned last in the sacred text. Moses says expressly, that Noah was five hundred years old, and begat Shem, Ham, and Japhet. And since Ham is declared in Scripture, to be Noah's younger son,* the three brothers must have been at different births ; therefore the historian must be understood to mean, that he began, in the five hundredth year of his age, to beget children, and in that year begat his eldest son. But in Gen. xi. 10. it is said, that Shem was an hundred years old, and begat Arphaxad, two years after the flood. Now had Shem been Noah's eldest son, he must have been an hundred and two years old at least, the second year after the flood ; for Noah begat his eldest son in his five hundredth year, and from thence to the flood were an hundred years ; for according to Moses, in the six hundredth year of Noah's life the flood began. Therefore, if Shem was only an hundred years old, two years after the flood, it evidently follows, that Japhet must be the son which Noah begat in his five hundredth year, and consequently must be elder than Shem.† This argument seems completely to determine the controversy, which has been long maintained among interpreters, concerning the sense of the Hebrew text, Gen. x. 21. which considered by itself, may signify either that Shem was the elder brother of Japhet, or that Shem was the " brother of Japhet the elder." The last now appears to be the true meaning, and is therefore justly preferred by the Septuagint, and our English translators.

The sacred historian begins his account of the descendants

* Gen. ix. 24.

† Well's Geog. vol. 1. p. 57.

of Noah, with the sons of Japhet; but for what reason he does so, is uncertain. It is evident he had no regard in his statement to seniority of birth; for he gives us the line of Ham before that of Shem, who, by his express declaration, was the eldest of the two brothers.

In the following sketch, I shall strictly adhere to the order of seniority, which requires us to begin with the descendants of Japhet. The region in which the sons of Japhet formed their first settlements, the sacred historian distinguishes by a general name: "the Isles of the Gentiles*." By this phrase the Hebrews meant, not only those places which are on all sides surrounded by water, but also those countries which they could not conveniently approach but by sea. Now, such were in relation to them the countries of Europe and the Lesser Asia: these, therefore, they called the isles of the Gentiles. In confirmation of this view, many passages of Scripture might be quoted; but I shall produce only one from the prophecies of Isaiah, where, in reference to the calling of the Gentiles and the restoration of the Jews, the prophet foretels, "The Lord shall recover the remnant of his people from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea†." In this remarkable prophecy, the islands of the sea, (which are the same with the isles of the Gentiles,) are distinguished from the other countries from whence the chosen people were to be recovered; and by consequence may be justly reckoned the countries of Europe and the Lesser Asia. Nor is it reasonable to suppose, that the prophet, in his enumeration of the places where the Gentiles were to be favoured with the glad tidings of salvation, would omit those countries where the gospel obtained its brightest triumphs, and which have continued through every succeeding age, the principal seat of the Christian church.

We are therefore to look for the settlements of Japhet and

* Gen. x, 5.

† Is. xi. 11.

his sons, chiefly in the countries of Europe and the Lesser Asia. The sons of Japhet mentioned by Moses, are seven, who were probably the founders of as many nations.

1. The descendants of Gomer, the eldest son of the family, settled in that part of the Lesser Asia, which, lying toward the north-east, comprehends the countries of Phrygia, Pontus, Bithynia, and a great part of Galatia. Josephus, the celebrated Jewish historian, says expressly, that the Galatians who lived in this tract, were called Gomerites. Herodotus mentions the Cimmerii as inhabiting the same region; and Pliny speaks of a town in Troas, a part of Phrygia, called Comara or Cimmeris; and Mela speaks of the Comari:—names which are obviously derived from Gomer. In allusion to the same Hebrew term, the learned Bochart imagines, that the Greeks gave the name of Phrygia to a considerable part of the Lesser Asia. The root Gamar, he observes, signifies to consume, and that its derivative Gumra or Gumro signifies a coal; whence the Greeks coming to know the import of these words, might thereby be induced to think that the name Gomer was imposed on these parts, as denoting a soil so black as if it had been burnt to a coal; and by consequence, might be induced to impose on the same countries a name of similar import, and call it *φρυγία*, Phrygia or the burnt country, from *φρυγειν*, which in the Greek language signifies to roast. This conjecture carries along with it the greatest probability, both because there are instances of the same nature which may be pointed out in our progress, and because it is certain, that a part of this country the Greeks distinguished by a special name, *φρυγία καυμένη*, burnt Phrygia*.

That Gomer obtained for his inheritance those parts of Asia Minor, seems to be confirmed by the settlements of his three sons within the general lot assigned to the whole nation. To Ashkenaz was allotted the Lesser Phrygia or Troas, from whom the river Ascanius, the province Ascania, and the As-

* See also Well's Geog. vol. 1. p. 62.

canian Isles, mentioned by Pliny, certainly derived their names.

The true situation of this branch of Gomer's family may be inferred, with no small degree of certainty, from a passage in the prophecies of Jeremiah, where, predicting the fall of Babylon by the arms of Cyrus, he issues this order from the mouth of Jehovah, "Call together against her the kingdoms of Ararat, and Minni, and Ashkenaz*." But Xenophon informs us, that Cyrus having taken Sardes, sent Hystaspes with an army into the *Phrygia that lies on the Hellespont*; and that Hystaspes having made himself master of the country, brought along with him from thence, a great body of Phrygian horse and other soldiers, whom Cyrus united to his army, and conducted against Babylon. Hence, the kingdom of Ashkenaz lay in that part of Phrygia which is washed by the waters of the Hellespont and the Euxine sea.

Rephat, the second son of Gomer, settled eastward from his brother in the adjoining country, which, according to Josephus, was from his name originally called Riphatea, but known to the ancients by the name of Paphlagonia. A part of this people were also seated in Pontus and Bithynia; and the whole nation were at first called Rephathæ, and afterwards, by contraction, Riphæi†. Some traces of this name may be found in the writings of the ancient Greeks and Romans. Apollonius, in his *Argonautics*, mentions a river called Rhebæus, which, rising in this tract, empties itself into the Euxine sea. This is the river which is called by other writers Rhebas. Stephanus mentions both the river and a country of the same name, whose inhabitants were called Rhebæi. This is the people whom Pliny denominates (more agreeably to the name of their forefather) Riphæi.

Togarmah, the third son of Gomer, occupied the Greater

* Jer. li, 27.

† Bochart, vol. 1, Well's Sacred Geog. vol. 1. p. 64, John Edward's Perfection of Scripture.

Phrygia and a part of Galatia. The kingdom of Togarmah lay almost due north from Judea, on the shores of the Euxine, touching the east border of Rephat. This accords with the situation assigned to this family, both in the sacred Scriptures and in profane writings. Their relative situation to Judea is distinctly marked by the prophet in these words: "Gomer and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands *." And again, "They of the house of Togarmah traded in thy fairs, with horses, and horsemen, and mules †." Togarmah then, lay nearly due north from Judea; which is confirmed by every map of those regions: and we know from the testimony of many writers, that Cappadocia, which embraced a considerable part of the lot of Togarmah, was long celebrated for an excellent breed of horses and mules, and for expert horsemen. Some traces of the name of Togarmah may be discovered in the names by which some of the inhabitants of this tract were known to ancient writers. Strabo says the Trochmi dwelt in the confines of Pontus and Cappadocia. Cicero calls them Trogmi; and Stephanus, Trocmeni‡. It is evident, that all these names derive their origin from Togarmah; for they retain all the radical letters of the name of their progenitor but one; and though the Greeks, according to their usual custom, have transposed one of the letters, to render the sound more pleasing to their fastidious ear, still the affinity is obvious. Thus it is ascertained, from the true situation of the three great branches of Gomer's family, that his descendants occupied those countries which extend along the shores of the Hellespont and Black sea.

But the sons of Gomer were not long satisfied with their original settlements; large bodies of them crossed the straits in quest of new habitations, and gave their name to the Cimmerian Bosphorus. From the strait of Caffa and the borders

* Ezek. xxxviii. 6.

† Chap. xxvii. 14.

‡ Well's Hist. Geog. vol. 1, p. 65. Bocharti Phaleg.

of the *Palus Mæotis*, they advanced along the banks of the Danube, till they took possession of the country, which from them has been called *Gomerman*, or *Germany*. In the word *Cimbri*, the name of a German tribe, and also, in their common name *Germans*, or as they call themselves *Germen*, which is but a small variation from *Gemren* or *Gomren*, which last, is easily contracted from *Gomeren*, that is, *Gomeræans*,—we can trace without difficulty, the primitive name of *Gomer*.

From *Germany*, the descendants of *Gomer* by degrees, spread into ancient *Gaul*, of which they were the aboriginal inhabitants. Their posterity received from the Greeks, the name of *Galatæ* or *Kalatæ*, and by contraction *Keltæ*, the *Celtæ* of the Latins, and the *Celts* of modern times. That the Gauls or *Celtæ* were *Cimmerians* or descendants of *Gomer*, is attested by *Appian* in the clearest terms; the *Celtæ* or Gauls, says he, were otherwise called *Cimbri*: and *Plutarch* asserts, that the *Cimbri* are called *Galloscythians*.

From the opposite shores of ancient *Gaul*, the *Gomeræans*, or *Cimbri*, passed over into *Britain*; for it cannot be doubted that the British isles were peopled from the nearest points of the neighbouring coast. To prove beyond a doubt, that the ancient Britons were the lineal descendants of *Gomer*, no other evidence need be produced, than the very names by which the Welsh continue to distinguish themselves from the rest of the nation: they call themselves *Kumero* or *Cymro*, and *Kumeri*; in like manner, they call a Welsh woman *Kumeræs*, and their language *Kumeraeg*. These are terms which exhibit an undeniable affinity to the primitive name of *Gomer*, and clearly prove their descent from that patriarch. The inhabitants of *Cumberland* also retain the name of their progenitor; they were at first called *Cimbri* or *Cumbri*, and afterwards *Cambri*; and *Cumberland* itself is the land of the *Cumbri*, *Cimbri*, or *Gomeræans*.

But the Welsh, and the inhabitants of *Cumberland*, are not the only descendants of *Gomer* in the British isles. It is well

known that the Saxons, and especially the Angles, were near neighbours to the Cimbri; and if it be admitted that Germany was peopled by the sons of Gomer, then the German tribes, the Saxons and Angles, who drove back the ancient Britons into the mountains of Wales, are branches from the same root, equally descended from the eldest son of Japhet.

As Gomer established himself in the northern regions of the Lesser Asia, so Javan, another son of the same family, fixed his abode in the southern parts of the same country. This fact is ascertained from the situation of his four sons, Elisha, Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim. Tarshish, the second son of Javan, settled in Cilicia, a country lying in the south eastern part of Asia Minor. The whole country, says Josephus, was anciently called Tarshish, from the founder of the kingdom, and its capital city Tarsus.

The city of Tartessus in Spain, and the adjoining territory so highly celebrated by the ancients for its riches, was a colony of Tarshish; for the name Tarshish, is by an easy and frequent change, turned into Tartish, from whence, it is easy to form Tartessus. Besides, the learned Bochart has observed, that Polybius, reciting the words of a league made between the Romans and Carthaginians, mentions a place under the name of Tarseium; and Stephanus expressly says, that Tarseium was a city near the pillars of Hercules; a situation which corresponds sufficiently with the site of Tartessus. To this city, the prophet undoubtedly alluded in his address to Tyre; "Tarshish was thy merchant, by reason of the multitude of all kinds of riches; with silver, iron, tin, and lead, they traded in thy fairs*." Tartessus was long renowned for its various and abundant riches; and Spain, it is well known, formerly abounded in the metals enumerated by the prophet.

It appears from several notices in the sacred writings, that the descendants of Tarshish were the most expert seamen, and consequently, the principal merchants of those remote ages.

* Ezek. xxvii. 12.

Hence, they gave the name of their progenitor first to the sea of Cilicia, which washes the shores of their original settlements, and afterwards, to the whole expanse of the Mediterranean, which seems to have been called for several ages, the sea of Tarshish. The extent of their commerce, and the length of their voyages, were sufficiently great to give a distinctive name to ships of a certain form and burthen, though they neither belonged to the sons of Tarshish, nor navigated the sea which bore their name. Vessels of a greater burthen, and intended for longer voyages, were built in imitation of theirs, and called ships of Tarshish. This is perhaps the true reason, that Solomon's fleet was called a navy of Tarshish*; and the ships which Jehoshaphat ordered to be built, ships of Tarshish†. The fleets of these princes, were stationed at Ezion-gaber on the Red sea; and by consequence, they neither navigated the sea of Tarshish or Mediterranean, nor traded to Tartessus or any of the settlements formed by that people, but to some port in Africa or the East Indies; the only countries that produced the commodities, ivory, apes, and peacocks, with which they returned to Palestine, after a coasting voyage of three years.

To the west of Tarshish, and adjoining to it, lay the settlements of Kittim or Cittim, the descendants of Seth, the son of Javan. In this quarter, according to Ptolomy, was the country of Cetis; and Homer mentions in the *Odyssey*, a people whom he calls Cetii, who are supposed to derive their name from the river Cetius, which flowed through their country. In perfect agreement with Homer, the Seventy interpreters render Kittim by *Κητιοι*, Ketii or Cetii; and therefore, it is probable, that both people and river took their name from Seth, the son of Javan.

Colonies of the same people crossed the Hellespont and settled in Greece. In the book of Numbers it is predicted; "ships shall come from the coasts of Chittim:" by which the

* 1 Kings x. 22.

† Ch. xxii. 48.

Greeks and Seleucidæ who chastised the Hebrews and Assyrians, are generally understood. In the first book of Maccabees, the king of Macedon is called the king of Shittim. Several bodies of this nation settled in Cilicia; on account of which, it is called in Scripture the land of Chittim*, and because from that country Alexander marched to the memorable siege of Tyre†.

The posterity of Seth, or the Kittim, seem to have colonized the neighbouring isles of Crete and Cyprus; for Ptolomy mentions the city of Cyteum in the former, and Strabo the city of Cittium in the latter: and Josephus relates that Cetios was the Greek name of Cyprus itself; from whence, says he, all the Greek isles were called Chittim.

It is evident from the following passage in Daniel, that Italy was indebted for her inhabitants to the same people; “the ships of Chittim shall come against thee‡.” The Roman fleets are certainly meant in this prediction; but they might sail to the attack of Antiochus from Cilicia, in whose harbours they were commonly stationed to command the Mediterranean. The most probable opinion, and one that puts an end to the disputes of commentators and critics on that passage of the prophet, is, that colonies of this people were settled in both Greece and Italy; and consequently, whether the Roman fleet sailed from the Tiber, or some harbour in Cilicia, it might still be truly called the ships of Chittim.

On the western coast of Asia Minor, inclining to the south, were the original settlements of Elisha, another of the sons of Javan. We can discover some traces of his name in the *Æloes* or *Æolians*, who were anciently settled in the neighbourhood, and who are expressly affirmed by Josephus to have been descended from Elisha. From the opposite coast of Asia Minor, Elisha probably in the train of his father Javan, passed over into Greece, and finally settled in that country. From Javan, the country of Ionia certainly took its name; and the

* Is. xxiii. 1.

† John Edward's *Perfection of Scripture*.

‡ Dan. xi. 30.

Iones or Iaones of Homer and Strabo derived their origin. Josephus asserts, that from Javan came Ionia, and all the Greeks: and Greece is expressly called Javan in the prophecies of Daniel *.

The sons of Elisha seem to have occupied in their passage from Asia to Europe, the principal isles of the Grecian Archipelago; for the prophet Ezekiel calls them the isles of Elisha. That he alludes to these isles, is evident from what he says of the blue and purple fabrics which constituted the principal part of their trade with Tyre; for we know that they were long celebrated by common authors, for the richness and brilliancy of their blue and purple dyes.

The Greeks were reminded of their descent from Elisha by the name *Ελλας*, which for many generations belonged to all the nations of Greece. They could trace their origin also, in the city and province of Elis in the Peloponnesus, in the city of Eleusis in Attica, and in the river Elissus or Ilissus in the same province; and as many believe in the Elysian fields, that were so long one of the favourite themes of their enraptured bards.

“On the same western coast, south of the family of Elisha,” says Dr Wells, “may the family of Dodanim be supposed to have first planted itself. For there we find in ancient writers, a country called Doris, which may not improbably be derived originally from Dodanim; especially if this be a plural, as the termination seems to import: and so the singular was Dodan, which being softened into Doran, the Greeks might easily frame from thence Dorus, whom they affect to have been the father of the Dorians.” This writer thinks, that the carelessness of some transcriber, by changing the Daleth into Resh, than which nothing can be more easy, converted the Hebrew word Dodanim into Doranim, which the Greeks transformed into Doros or Dores; and consequently the Dores among the Greeks, mentioned by Moses under the name Dodanim, being

* Dan. i. 20, and xi. 2.

descended from Javan, must have had their first settlement in Doris, a province of the Lesser Asia.

But if the Greeks converted Dodanim into Doris, it is natural to suppose they would never return to the original term, nor use any word derived from it. How then are we to account for the manifest traces of this term in Epirus, and part of Peloponnesus? The city of Dodona in Epirus, where Jupiter had one of his most celebrated oracles, and from whence he borrowed one of his designations, Dodonæan Jove, bears indubitable marks of the ancient and primitive Dodanim. It is not improbable, that Dodanim and his sons after leaving Babel, or the interamnian region in a part of which it was built, remained some time in Asia Minor, and perhaps formed a permanent establishment in the neighbourhood of his brother Elisha; but they seem to have left no certain traces behind them, till they finally settled in Epire and the Peloponnese.

The Dorians, it is probable, were originally a Phenician colony, that settled in Greece, in ages long posterior to the confusion of tongues. We find in that country the maritime city Dora, or Doro, in the neighbourhood of Carmel, between Ptolemais and Cesarea. Dorus appears from the books of Joshua and Judges, to have been a royal city, and one of the most ancient in Phenicia. It was so strongly fortified, that the tribe of Manasseh to whose lot it fell, were not able to take it, and expel the inhabitants; though they forced them at last to pay them a yearly tribute. The original inhabitants of this ancient and powerful city, Pausanias expressly calls Dorians; and since Cadmus and other Phenicians settled in Greece, and introduced among its barbarous tribes, the first rudiments of learning and civilization, it is extremely probable, that the Dorians of Greece derived their origin from that renowned city.

From the nations of Gomer and Javan, by whom the countries of Europe were peopled, we now proceed to make a few remarks on the posterity of Tubal and Meshech. These nations are commonly mentioned together by Moses, and other

inspired writers ; from whence it may be reasonably concluded that they occupied adjoining territories.

The first settlements of Meshech were contiguous to the nation of Gomer on the east, and situated in Cappadocia and Armenia. These were probably the same people whom the Greeks denominated Moschi, from Mosoch, as the name Meshech is read by the Seventy and other interpreters, who were situated in these countries, and from whom the neighbouring ridge of hills undoubtedly took the name of the Moschic mountains.

Along the northern boundary of Meshech, extended the plantations of his brother Tubal, the father of the Albani, Chalybes, and Iberi, who, says the Jewish historian, were originally called Thobeli, from Tubal the founder of their family. In this country Ptolomy places the city Thabilaca, which is evidently derived from Tubal. In the opinion of Mede, the Alybe mentioned by Homer in his second Iliad, lay in this quarter, to which he traces the name of Albania, which, in succeeding ages, distinguished a part of Tubal's inheritance. Alybe he conceives to have been a name corrupted from Abyle, and this from Tabyle, an easy derivative from Tubal. In like manner, Bochart supposes the Tibareni, a people mentioned by old authors in this tract, to have derived their name from Tubal, by the change of l into r, by a very common mutation in ancient times. Their settlement in this country, is further confirmed by the following passage of Ezekiel : "Tubal and Meshech, they were thy merchants : they traded in slaves and vessels of brass, in thy market*." The words of the prophet entirely agree with the accounts which ancient writers give us of Cappadocia, and other regions of Pontus, where the inhuman traffic in slaves was carried on to a great extent, and the best sort of brass known in those times was produced. Bochart observes, that the Hebrew word translated in this place brass, is sometimes rendered *steel* ; and hence

* Ezek. xxvii, 13.

he remarks, that, as a piece of iron or brass is, in the Arabic tongue, called Tubal, probably from its coming out of the country of Tubal; so it is likely that, from the excellent steel which was made in this country, some of its inhabitants were distinguished by the name of Chalybes among the Greeks; the word Chalybs, in the Greek language, signifying *steel*.

The Spanish nation claims the honour of being descended from 'Tubal; and, if it be considered that their country was known to the ancient Greeks by the name of Iberia, and to distinguish it from Asiatic Iberia, by the peculiar designation of Celtiberia; and that some remains of this ancient name are still preserved in Ebro, the name of a river in Spain, from Iberus, the name which it received from the Greeks and Latins, —their claim seems to be well founded.

Some of the posterity of Meshech penetrated into the wilds of Scythia, and peopled the dreary regions of the farthest north. For Meshech and 'Tubal, in the prophecies of Ezekiel, are sometimes expressive of that vast country*. And, in another passage, they are joined with Magog, whom the sacred writer styles "the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal:" or, as it is in the margin, the prince of the chief of Meshech and 'Tubal. In other translations, and particularly in the Septuagint, it is thus rendered, "The prince of Rosh, Meshech and 'Tubal;" for the Hebrew word Rosh, may be considered either as an appellative, or as a proper name. The learned Bochart has observed, from the Nubian geographer, that the river in Armenia, called by the Greeks Araxes, is, by the Arabians, called Rosh; and, from this, and other instances of a similar nature, he not only infers that the people that lived on the banks of that river, were probably denominated Rosh, but also proves, from Josephus Bengorion, that a people did exist in those parts, under the name of Rossi. Intimately connected with the Rossi, was the other colony of Meshech or Mosoch, called by the Greeks Moschi, the progenitors of the modern

* Ezek. xxxii, 26.

Muscovites. As these tribes had lived in the neighbourhood of each other, before they left their settlements in Asia; so, preserving the relations of amity in their long and perilous journey, they finally settled in the same region: the Moschi, in the country which boasts of the far-famed Moscow, the ancient capital of all the Russias; and the Rossi, in the adjoining provinces of the south. These circumstances render it extremely probable, that the Muscovites and Russians in Europe, were colonies of Meshech, or jointly of Meshech and Tubal.

The inheritance of Magog, another branch of the same family, is placed, by the harmonious voice of antiquity, north of Tubal, on the east and north-east shores of the Euxine. Magog is generally reckoned the father of the Scythians that occupied those countries; for Pliny assures us, that Scythopolis and Hierapolis, which those Scythians took when they conquered Syria, were ever afterwards called Magog. Ptolomy grants, that the proper name of Hierapolis was Magog. This fact is confirmed by Josephus, who says, that the Scythians were called Magog by the Greeks; and from that circumstance, infers their lineal descent from Magog, the son of Japhet.

The situation of Magog, on the north-east of the Euxine, is confirmed by the following words of Ezekiel: "Set thy face against Gog, in, or of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal*." From these words, no doubt can be entertained that the land of Magog lay very near the countries of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal, which, from the statements already made, it could do only on the north. Mede has observed, that the names Gog and Magog have the same signification; and he conceives, that it pleased the Spirit of God to distinguish in this manner between the land and the people of the land, by calling the people Gog, and the country the land of Magog†.

* Ezek. xxxviii. 2.

† Well's Hist. Geog. Bocharti Phaleg.

The learned Bochart conjectures, that the mountains of Caucasus derived their name from Gog, who was the first that settled on their stupendous range, or in the circumjacent countries. He observes, that these words גִּי-גִּי הַכּוּכָּז, Gog-chasan, denote, in the neighbouring oriental tongue, as much as Gog's fort; and from Gog-chasan, the Greeks framed the name *Καυκάσος*, Caucasus.

Strabo mentions a country in the neighbourhood of Caucasus, under the name of Gogarene, which is a manifest derivation from Gog; but whether Georgia, the name of a considerable kingdom on that vast ridge, can, as Dr Wells supposes, be traced to the same root, is too problematical to merit further attention. It is far more probable that the Magini, a people about the river Tanais, mentioned by that geographer, was a scion from the stock of Magog; for the transition from Magog to Magogini, and from thence, by abbreviation, to Magini, is neither long nor difficult.

The third son of Japhet was Madai, who is almost universally believed to have been the father of the Medes; for, in the prophecies of Isaiah and other parts of Scripture, Madai is the Hebrew word for Media. Mr Mede, however, is of a different opinion, because, the country of the Medes mentioned in other places of Scripture, lay so far to the north-east of the Holy Land, and therefore of Egypt, that the way of travelling from the one to the other, was by land and not by sea; and consequently, the said Media cannot be tolerably comprehended under the names of the isles of the Gentiles, which are the countries expressly said by Moses, in the place where he professedly speaks of the first plantations of mankind, to be divided or possessed by the sons of Japhet. Another argument adduced in support of his opinion is, that by this arrangement, the lot of Madai seems to have been wholly separated from the lots of the rest of his brethren, and so, to have lain not within the general lot of the nation of Japhet his father, but within the general lot of the nation of Shem.

But these arguments, though possessed of considerable weight, ought not to determine the judgment in opposition to the authority of Moses. The rules which an author has framed with the greatest care, may admit of exceptions, and the most plausible theory should certainly yield to indubitable and stubborn facts. The inspired writer places Madai in the line of Japhet, but is totally silent about another person of that name, who, Mr Mede supposes, might have descended from Shem. No writer, sacred or common, takes notice of such a person; his existence, therefore, is a mere gratuitous supposition, assumed to cover the defect of a plausible and favourite theory. If the inspired writer has enumerated the founders of all the other nations on the face of the earth, why, it may be asked, has he omitted the father of so considerable a nation, and one destined to act so conspicuous a part on the theatre of the world, as the Medes? Is it probable, as Mede seems to think, that their progenitor was some obscure individual, posterior to the times of Moses, and therefore, not mentioned in his writings? If the supposed Madai of the house of Shem, was not in existence till after the death of Moses, how are we to account for the total silence of the other inspired writers, in relation to this person, who so frequently speak of the nation and affairs of the Medes? The general opinion then seems to be just, that the nation of the Medes trace their descent up to Madai the son of Japhet. The argument that his inheritance must then be separated from his brethren, and placed within the general lot of Shem, is not conclusive; for it is only an exception to the general rule: and a similar exception occurs in the arrangement of the twelve tribes of Israel in Canaan; for the "inheritance of Simeon was within the inheritance of the children of Judah.*"

Mr Mede has justly remarked, that the country of the Medes cannot with propriety, be comprehended under the name of "the isles of the Gentiles," for the way to Media

* Josh. xix. 1

from Egypt and Palestine, is by land and not by sea. But even this is no valid objection; because, the words of Moses only point out the general possessions of Japhet, without regard to some accidental deviations. Nor can the settlements of Madai be justly viewed in the light of a total departure from the general rule; for, though his posterity fixed their first and principal seats in Media, they were not long in sending out colonies, that by the admission of Mr Mede himself, penetrated into Macedonia; and this country, he considers as their proper inheritance, their earliest and their final abode. But Macedonia is fully comprehended within the circle, allotted by the sacred writer, under the name of the isles of the Gentiles, to the sons of Japhet.

That Macedonia was originally peopled by the sons of Madai, has been proved from the ancient name of the country, *Æmathia* or *Æmadia*, which is evidently the same with Madai, the Greeks in admitting it into their language, prefixing a diphthong to improve the sound. The fact is confirmed by the discovery of a people in this region, that were called *Μῆδοι* Medi, or *Μαῖδοι* Mædi. Aristotle, adds Mr Mede, in his book of Strange Reports, speaks of *Χωρα Μηδικη*, the Medic region in the borders of Paconia; and hereabout was the *Præfectura Medica* of Roman story.

The Mæsiens in Europe, Mr Mede supposes, were descended from that patriarch; and Bochart thinks, that the Samaritans were a colony of the eastern Madai; for the name of the Samaritans, he conjectures, was originally composed of *שאר-מדי* Sear, or Sar-Madai, which, in the oriental languages, denotes the remnant or posterity of the Medes.

The last son of Japhet is Tiras, who is universally allowed to be the progenitor of the Thracians. The Greeks adapted the original term to their language, by changing it into Thrax, in which the affinity may still be discerned. But the relation of the Thracians to Tiras, is more clearly proved from several names which were long retained in that country. Several an-

cient writers inform us of a river, a bay, and a harbour, which all bore the name of Athiras; and they mention a city in the peninsula of Thrace, named Tyristasis, a district called Thrasus, and a people called Trausi.

The sons of Tiras, it is generally believed, not long after their settlement in Thrace, sent a colony who took possession of the opposite country, on the north side of the Euxine. Both the Greek and Latin writers, mention a considerable river under the name of Tiras, which entirely preserves the memory of the Thracian patriarch, the founder of the nation. On the banks of this river, supposed to be the Niester, formerly stood a city which also sustained the name of Tiras. The inhabitants of the same country, were distinguished by the name of Tyretæ or Tyragetæ: the former, probably the true descendants of Tiras; the latter, a mixed race from the intermarriages of the Tyretæ and the Getæ, a neighbouring people, who were descended perhaps of Cetim that settled in Macedonia*.

But the original settlement of Tiras, Dr Wells places on the shores of the Lesser Asia, opposite to Thrace, the scene of the long and arduous struggle between the Greeks and the Trojans, his lineal and original offspring. He thinks it not improbable, that Tros, the name of the first king of Troy, containing all the radical letters of Tiras, was either Tiras himself, or one of his early descendants.

Bordering on the nation and families of Gomer, to the east and the south, were the first plantations of the sons of Shem. The family of this patriarch, according to Moses, consisted of five sons: Elam, and Ashur, and Arphaxad, and Lud, and Aram.

As the youngest branch of this family took possession of the countries adjoining to the nations which sprung from the loins of Tiras, the last of the sons of Japhet, whose situation we have endeavoured to ascertain, it may be proper to begin with an account of his settlements. In the general division of the

* Well's Geog. vol. 1. p. 39. Bocharti Phaleg.

earth, the countries of Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Syria fell to the share of Aram. From him, Armenia probably took its name. Mesopotamia, so called by the Greeks from its situation between the noble rivers the Euphrates and the Tigris, was known to the Hebrews by the equally significant name of Aram-Naharaim, Aram between the two rivers. The lower parts of Mesopotamia, like Arabia Deserta to which it extends, is a dreary and sterile waste; but the upper part of the country which borders on Armenia, is exceedingly fruitful and pleasant. It is this rich and delightful region which the sacred writers distinguish by the appropriate name of Padan-Aram, or Sedan-Aram; words of the same import, denoting fruitful or cultivated Aram*.

The number of Aram's original settlements was four, corresponding to the number of his sons, Uz, Hul, Gether and Mash. The eldest brother Uz, is generally regarded by the ancients as the builder of Damascus; from whence it may be reasonably supposed, that the circumjacent country, including a considerable district in Arabia Deserta, is the land of Uz mentioned in the Scriptures, and celebrated for the severe and protracted sufferings of the patient and venerable Job. The prosperity of Damascus, the first undertaking of Aram deserving of notice, and the capital of his kingdom, corresponded with the beauty and fertility of the country where it is situate. It became the seat of a powerful government, that ruled over the kingdom denoted in Scripture by the name of Aram-Damasek, or Syria of Damascus; which was long the scourge and terror of the surrounding nations. The possessions of Aram comprehended only a part of Syria Proper; for Phenicia and Palestine, both of which were reckoned parts of Syria, belonged to the descendants of Canaan.

The family of Hul, or more agreeably to the original word Chul, has been placed with great probability in Armenia, particularly in Armenia Major. Beside the names of many places

* Bocharti Phaleg. Well's Geog. vol. 1. p. 92.

beginning with the radical letters of Chul, we find a province in Armenia under the name of Cholobetene, which is a manifest corruption of Cholbeth, the house or dwelling of Chol. This circumstance renders it extremely probable, that Chul and his family settled in that part of the country.

The inheritance of Mash lay between Hul to the north, and Uz to the south, near the mountain Masius; which probably owed its name to this descendant of Aram. In this mountain are the sources of the river Masca, one of the streams which wind through the rich and beautiful country of Mesopotamia: and the people of the adjoining country are by Stephanus expressly called Masieni or Masiani. All these are sure indications that here was the original settlement of Mash.

Gether, the remaining son of Aram, seems to have chosen Albania for the place of his abode: for Ptolomy mentions an Albanian city which formerly bore the name of Getaræ, and a river of the same country named Getras; which bear so striking an affinity to Gether, as to render it almost certain that this was the first settlement he formed.

Ashur, as the name sufficiently proves, was the founder of the Assyrian monarchy. This kingdom is not the same with that vast and powerful empire, the foundations of which were laid in Babylon, by the genius and ambition of Nimrod. It lay on the east of the Tigris, in western Assyria, the capital of which was the renowned city of Nineveh; and was afterwards distinguished by the name of Adiabene, from two rapid and turbulent rivers, the Diavas and the Adiavas, which intersected the country.

Assyria in the Chaldee, by changing the sh into t, was formerly called Attyria; from which it has been erroneously considered by some writers to be a distinct country from Adiabene, or Assyria Proper.

The true situation of Elam is easily determined, both by the authority of Scripture and the concurrent testimony of Heathen authors. The sacred writers frequently speak of a people near

the Persian gulf, beyond the Tigris or Euphrates, by the name of Elam; and profane authors, of a country there called Elymais, and a city of the same name. Like many other names, Elam is sometimes taken in a more restricted sense, in which it is distinguished from Susiana, and the other provinces; sometimes in a larger sense, so as to include these countries. Hence, Pliny and Ptolomy mention the Elymæi, as a people near the Persian gulf; and on the other hand, Daniel the prophet speaks of Shushan the capital of Susiana, as lying in the province of Elam*.

Arphaxad inhabited the vale of Shinar, on the river Tigris, toward the southern extremity of Mesopotamia, together with the country of Eden, and the tract on the east side of the same river, called Arrapachitis, a name plainly derived from Arpachshad, the name of Arphaxad in the Hebrew text. The truth of this assertion rests upon the following considerations: 1. After the flood, Noah probably returned to the pleasant and fruitful vales of the rapid Tigris, with whose richness and beauty he was well acquainted: a supposition which is confirmed by the town of Zama, built in that country, probably by one of the sons of Shem, and named in honour of his father, who is uniformly called Zam by the Arabians. 2. The family of Shem took no part in the presumptuous undertaking at Babel, which issued in the dispersion of the settlers; and by consequence, being exempt from their punishment, continued to occupy their original habitations, and to converse in the language of their forefathers. 3. This opinion may be confirmed from these words of Moses: "And their dwelling was from Mesha, as you go unto Sephar, a mount of the east†. Mesha is probably the mountain Mash or Masius, in the western parts of Mesopotamia; and Sephar, the mountain adjoining to Siphare, a city in Aria, which lies directly east from Mesha. In this long tract of country, which, though large, certainly was not more extensive than his numerous family required, lived

* Bochart. Well's Geog. vol. 1, p. 96. Dan. viii. 2. † Gen. x. 30.

Arphaxad, with his renowned progenitors, Shem and Noah. 4. In the province of Susiana, if any credit is due to several ancient writers, stood the town of Sela, probably built by Sela one of the sons of Arphaxad, and called, at least, by his name. Now Susiana, it has been shewn, contained a part of the country of Eden, which either lay contiguous to the vale of Shinar, or formed a part of the extensive region which sometimes went by that name. 5. That Arphaxad occupied the vale of Shinar, is further confirmed by Terah and Abraham, his lineal descendants, emigrating from that country into Syria. The words of Moses are: "And Terah took Abraham his son, and went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan." Now it is, perhaps, universally admitted, that Chaldea at least comprehended a great part of the vale of Shinar; and it certainly did comprehend all that part of Eden on the west side of the channel, which receives the united streams of the Tigris and Euphrates. And Josephus affirms, perhaps on the authority of this passage of Scripture, that the Chaldeans were originally called Arphaxadeans, from the father of their nation. These considerations, taken together, render it at least extremely probable, that the family of Arphaxad planted their original settlements in the vale of Shinar, including the land of Eden, without confining them, as some have supposed, to the province of Arrapachitis*. In this large and beautiful country, the virtuous children of Shem, one of whom had no fewer than thirteen sons, rapidly encreased into a numerous and respectable people; but they were soon subdued by the policy and arms of Nimrod, and absorbed in the vast and powerful empire which he founded at Babel.

Ham, the youngest son of Noah's family, unable to bear the presence of a father whom he had so greatly offended, and from whose reluctant lips he had drawn a curse upon himself and his posterity, mingled in the crowd of emigrants that took possession of the vale of Shinar, and engaged in their impious

* Bochart. Well's Geog. vol. 1. p. 98.

projects. Driven from Babel by the visitation of divine justice, he directed his steps into Syria, and after establishing his son Canaan in Palestine, proceeded with Mizraim into Egypt, where he spent the residue of his days. The journey of Ham into Egypt, and his final settlement there, is confirmed by the name which that country more than once, receives in the sacred Scriptures. For no other reason could it with propriety be called the "land of Ham," but because he directed in person, the settlements of Mizraim. Nor can it be reasonably doubted, that the person whom the Greeks elevated to the rank of a god, under the name of Jupiter Ammon, and in whose honour a splendid temple was built in the deserts of Lybia, so celebrated for its oracle, was the patriarch Ham.

Canaan, the youngest of his sons mentioned by Moses, settled in the country which for many ages sustained his name, and which came at length, by the decree of Heaven, into the possession of the chosen seed, the descendants of Abraham. As a particular account of this country will be given in a subsequent part of this work, I proceed to the settlements of Cush. It is universally admitted, that the nation of Cush obtained their inheritance in Arabia, the country adjoining to Canaan on the south. In Scripture the word Cush is commonly rendered Ethiopia, and the descendants of Cush Ethiopians; but with no propriety, unless we understand by it Asiatic Ethiopia, or Arabia; for the Cushites did not enter African Ethiopia, till some time after their settlement in this country.

That Arabia is denoted by Cush in the sacred Scriptures, is evident from several passages. In the book of Numbers we read, that Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married. But we know from Exod. ii. 15. that Moses' wife was a Midianitish woman; and it is confessed, that Midian or Madian was a city and country in Arabia, on the shore of the Red Sea. The wife of Moses was therefore an Arabian; and by consequence, the Hebrew term Cushite is not rightly translated Ethiopian, unless it be

understood of Ethiopia in Asia, that is, Arabia, not of Ethiopia in Africa. Another proof that the land of Cush was in Asia, may be drawn from these words of the prophet: "I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction; the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble*." In this passage, Cush and Midian are used as equivalent terms, denoting the same or parts of the same country. But African Ethiopia, so far from comprehending the land of Midian within its limits, does not even border upon it, but lies at a great distance in the interior. The following passage from Ezekiel affords a strong additional proof: "I will make the land of Egypt desolate, from the tower of Syene even unto the border of Cush†." Here the prophet evidently means, that the tower of Syene and the border of Cush, are the two extremities of Egypt. But Syene is situate on the very margin of the frightful desert which separates Egypt from African Ethiopia; therefore Cush, which is the opposite boundary, cannot be the country in Africa commonly known by the name of Ethiopia; but must be understood of that part of Arabia which extends to the northern boundary of Egypt, which is at the greatest distance from Ethiopia. Again, the sacred historian informs us, that whilst Sennacherib king of Assyria, was besieging Libnah in the tribe of Judah, Tirhaka king of Cush, was marching against him with a numerous army‡. In like manner, that Zera the Cushite came with a great army against Asa king of Judah§. But neither of these passages can refer to African Ethiopia; because, the monarch of that country cannot march an army against the land of Canaan, without passing through the burning deserts of Senaar, and the whole length of Egypt; an expedition which can be attended with nothing but ruin and disgrace. But to the king of the Cushite nation, it would be no difficulty to march an army against the land of Judah, a country which bordered on his dominions.

* Habak. iii. 7.

† Ezek. xxix. 10.

‡ 2 Kings xix. 9.

§ 2 Chron. xiv. 9.

That some of the Cushite tribes might, in process of time, pass over from the Arabian coast into the adjoining parts of Africa, and gradually extend their settlements into Ethiopia Proper, will be readily admitted, and is extremely probable; and in this sense, Cush may be called the father of the African Ethiopians. But it is uncertain whether the term Cush in Scripture ought ever to be rendered Ethiopia; the probability is, that in the sacred writings it uniformly refers to the dominions of the Cushite nation in Arabia*. This hypothesis has the higher claim on our attention, that we find all the descendants of Cush mentioned by Moses, except Nimrod, settled in Arabia.

The situation of Seba, the first son of Cush mentioned by Moses, is clearly indicated in the south-west part of Arabia, by the city of Sabe. On the south-east side, the city of Sabana may point out the settlement of Sheba, the grandson of Cush by Raama. That he dwelt in the neighbourhood of his father and brother, who fixed their abode in this part of the country, may be inferred as well from the influence of natural affection, as from the circumstance of his being always joined with them in the statements of the sacred writers. "The merchants of Sheba and Raama," says Ezekiel, "are thy merchants;" and in another passage, "Sheba and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish," &c.† These two families, Sheba and Seba, from the similarity of their names, were quickly confounded by the Greeks and Romans, and called promiscuously Sabæns; but in the sacred writings they are accurately distinguished: "The kings of Sheba and Seba," said the royal Psalmist, "shall offer gifts‡."

On the same side of Arabia, the city called Rhegma (the term by which the Septuagint translates Raamah), on the shore of the Persian gulf, mentioned by Ptolomy, is supposed to point out the place of Raamah's habitation; and a little to

* Well's Geog. vol. 1. p. 101.

† Ezek. xxvii. 22. and xxxviii. 13.

‡ Psal. lxxii. 10.

the eastward on the same coast, another city called Dedan, the Daden of modern times, ascertains with complete certainty, the settlement of Dedan, the son of Raamah and the brother of Sheba*.

On the same line of coast to the northward, stood the city of Saphtha, which so nearly resembles Sabtah, the name of another son of Cush, that he may reasonably be supposed to have settled in this district. Still farther to the north, along the river Pison (as we have shewn already), lay the possessions of his brother Havilah. This fact has been ascertained from the names which ancient writers give to the inhabitants of the country,—the Chautolæi, or Chablasii, or Chaulasii; all which are manifestly derived from Chavilah.

The possessions of Sabteca, another son of Cush, are omitted by the sacred writers, because these parts of Arabia lying next to the land of Canaan, are comprehended in the general allotment of Cush his father, who probably settled with him in this region.

Dr Wells supposes, that the descendants of Sabteca might be from him regularly enough styled at first by the Greeks Sabtacæni; which name might be afterwards softened into Saraceni: by which name, it is well known, the people of this tract were formerly denominated. And this, he thinks, is the more probable, because Stephanus mentions a country in those parts called Saruca. Bochart insists that the Saracens derive their name from Sarak, which in Arabic signifies to steal or rob; and that this name was given these people as being addicted to robbery. And perhaps, adds Dr Wells, this might be the reason of changing the original name Sabtaceni, into the nick-name Saraceni. In whatever light the reader is disposed to view the conjectures of these learned writers, it must be admitted, that they perfectly correspond with the character and practices of the Saracens from the beginning of their history as a people.

* Bochart. Well's Geog. vol. 1. p. 102.

The true situation of Mizraim, the second son of Ham in the genealogy of Moses, is clearly determined in the Hebrew text; where the term Mizraim is generally employed to denote the land of Egypt. His family consisted of seven sons; the eldest of whom was Ludim, the father of the Ethiopians in Africa. That these Ethiopians are the Ludim, and their country the Lud of the sacred writers, is evident from the character which they give of that people: they are very "skilful in drawing the bow *; an art in which, according to many writers of antiquity, the Ethiopians were eminently distinguished. Again, the prophet Isaiah, in the passage quoted in the margin, speaks of Phut and Lud as if they were two adjoining nations. But Phut may be considered as denoting the city and country of Philæ, not far from Syene on the borders of Ethiopia. It is also worthy of remark, that the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel join Lud or Ludim with Cush and Phut. But by Cush these inspired writers mean Arabia; and by Phut, as shall be shewn immediately, the inhabitants of the country beyond Cyrene: therefore, by Lud, may be meant the Ethiopians, that lie nearly between the two former. The kingdom of Lydia, in the Lesser Asia, as it is rendered in our version, it cannot be; for that country is at too great a distance from Cush and Phut, to admit of co-operation †.

The learned Bochart places the Anamim, in the country about the temple of Jupiter Ammon; and in confirmation of his opinion, observes, that Herodotus expressly asserts the Ammonians to be descendants partly of the Egyptians, and partly of the Ethiopians. From these Anamim or Ammonii, the same writer thinks the Nazamones, with their neighbours, the Amantes, the Garamantes, and the Hammanantes, mentioned by several ancient writers, are descended.

The Lehabim, an adjoining nation, probably settled in the country of Libya Proper, or as it has been called, Cyreniaca; and the Naphtuhim, towards Egypt, in the neighbouring country

* Isa. lxvi. 19. Jer. xlv. 9.

† Bocharti Phaleg. Well's Geog. vol. i. p. 104.

of Marmarica. The situation of the latter, is partly confirmed by some remainder of the name, in a place called *Aptuchifanum*. This opinion receives some countenance from the heathen fables, in which Aptuchus or Aphtuchus, is said to be the son of Cyrene, from whom the city and country of Cyrene took its name.

The Pathrusim, or descendants of Pathros, mentioned next by Moses, are the inhabitants of Upper Egypt or Thebais, where Ptolomy places Pathyris, an inland town, not far from Thebes. Of this opinion were the Seventy interpreters; for they render the Hebrew term Pathros, by the Greek Pathyris.

The Casluhim probably settled in the country on the other side of Egypt, named Casiotis, where also mount Casius is placed; both retain somewhat of the name Casluhim. But the situation of this people, is placed beyond a doubt by the remark of Moses, that from them sprang the Philistines, who, in process of time, seized on a narrow stripe of country in Palestine, stretching along the shores of the Mediterranean, and made a conspicuous figure in the subsequent history of that interesting part of the earth.

The Caphtorim were situate near to the Casluhim: for they are placed next to each other in the sacred text; and the Philistines, who are said to be descended from the Casluhim*, are in another passage, denoted by the name of Caphtorim†. Hence it may be inferred, that these two nations were near neighbours; and, united in the closest bonds of peace and amity, were at last blended into one people.

The name of Caphtor, seems to be preserved in an old city of Egypt, called Coptus. From this name, the Christians in Egypt are still called Cophtes or Copts, and the whole country, Egyptus, for Ægophtus, or the land of Coptus. The Greek Aia or Aea, as the learned Mede judiciously observed, is probably derived from the Hebrew אֵי or עֵי; and, in the passage already quoted from Jeremiah, what we render the

* Gen. x. 14.

† Deut. ii. 23. see also Jer. xlvii. 4.

country of Caphtor, is in the Hebrew text *Ai Captor*, which are the very two words from which Dr Wells, who adds this remark, supposes the Greeks have moulded the word *Αἴγυπτος* *Ægyptus*. It is certain, that the word *אֵי* *Ai*, translated country in our version, signifies also an isle; and this perfectly applies to Coptus, as it stood on a small island. In this insulated city, therefore, and in the circumjacent districts, we may, without hesitation, place the first settlement of the Caph-torim*.

The inheritance of Phut, the only remaining son of Ham, is placed with great probability, in the region adjoining to the western border of Cyrene. For in Africa properly so called, below Adrumetum, was a city named Putea, mentioned by Pliny; and in Mauritania, into the western parts of which the possessions of Phut extended to some length, is a river mentioned by Ptolomy, called Phut. Jerome asserts, that the river still retained the name in his time, and extended it to the whole country round, which from it was called the country of Phut. These are the plantations of the sons of Noah; and in this manner was the earth divided among the renovated nations, after their expulsion from the vale of Shinar.

CHAP. V.

OF THE CONQUESTS AND KINGDOM OF NIMROD.

DURING the first century after the deluge, the sons of Noah settled where they pleased, and enjoyed in common, the fruits of the undivided soil. This was the golden age of the poets, when the stone was not placed in the furrow, to mark the limits of the cultivated field.

* Well's Geog. vol. 1. p. 108.

“Non fixus et agris,

Qui regerit certis finibus arva, lapis.” *Tib. b. 1. El. 3.*

Virgil says, it was then unlawful to appropriate the surface of the ground*. But in the days of Phaleg, the silver age commenced; when the fields were divided, and became the private property of individuals, who began to cultivate the soil for their own benefit, and to accumulate wealth for their own families.

“Tum primum subiere domos,” &c.

Then the Noachidæ began to construct houses for their private accommodation, and to build the city and the tower of Babel, which excited the righteous anger of Heaven, and procured their dispersion over the face of all the earth. The iron age began with the birth of Nimrod, one of the most remarkable characters in the history of our species. He was the youngest son of Cush, and the grandson of Ham; equally distinguished, according to ancient writers, by the gigantic size and strength of his bodily frame, the vigour and extent of his mental powers, and his daring and insatiable ambition. In the presumptuous undertaking at Babel, he seems to have had no participation, and the probability is, that he was not come into existence, when the foundations of that amazing structure were laid. The manner in which the sacred historian introduces him to the notice of his readers, seems to indicate, that, though the youngest of the family, he was by far the most remarkable of the sons of Cush. The words of Moses are, “and Cush begat Nimrod;” as if he alone were deserving of our attention; and this conjecture is greatly strengthened by the next clause, which presents him in the commencement of his career: “he was a mighty hunter before the Lord.” Cherishing, it is probable, from his earliest years, the lust of power and the hope of sovereignty, he advanced towards the grand object of his ambition, with cautious and deliberate steps. He began the execution of his plans, by endeavouring to ingratiate

* Nec signare quidem aut partire limite campum Fas erat. *Geor. 1.*

himself with his future subjects. The terrors of the Cushite nation had been excited, and their safety endangered, by numerous beasts of prey from the surrounding deserts; his first attempt was to extirpate or drive back into the wilderness, those savage disturbers of the peaceful inhabitant. This was deemed in those times, a public benefit of the first importance. So late as the days of Homer, to deliver the people from the dread and ravages of wild beasts, was reckoned an achievement worthy of the most powerful monarchs, and ranked among the highest honours to which they could aspire.

Καρτιστοὶ μὲν ἔσαν, καὶ καρτιστοὺς ἔμαχοντο
 Φέρειν ὄρεσκαῶσι καὶ ἑκπαγλῶς ἀπολέσσαν. *Iliad* b. 1. l. 266.

To accomplish this beneficial and necessary purpose, and to promote at the same time, his secret designs on the liberty of his nation, he formed a band of resolute young men, at whose head he combated the wild beasts of the forest; and thus, by enuring his followers to the toils and dangers of the chase, he gradually formed them to the use of arms, reduced them to a state of rude discipline and imperfect submission—"that at a proper time, after they had been accustomed to his orders, and seasoned in arms, he might make use of them for other purposes more serious than hunting."

This artifice of Nimrod, Diodorus mentions, but by mistake ascribes it to Ninus his son. "Ninus, the most ancient of the Assyrian kings mentioned in history, performed great actions. Being naturally of a warlike disposition, and ambitious of glory that results from valour, he armed a considerable number of young men, that were brave and vigorous like himself; trained them up a long time in laborious exercises and hardships, and by that means, accustomed them to bear the fatigues of war patiently, and to face dangers with courage and intrepidity." By this means, Nimrod became "*a mighty hunter before the Lord*;" renowned above all his associates for skill,

intrepidity, and success in clearing his native land of the beasts of prey by which it was annoyed.

Flushed with success and conscious of his own power, he threw off the mask, refusing any longer to acknowledge the authority of his great grandfather Noah, and with a resolute hand, seized the reins of government. That he was guilty of rebellion on this occasion, is intimated by his name, derived from a Hebrew verb which signifies to rebel; but whether it was prophetic or given him after the event, is not known. Having reduced the Cushite nation to his obedience, he passed the Tigris, and compelled the inhabitants of Shinar to receive his yoke. He consolidated and extended his power, by entering into an alliance, if we may credit an ancient tradition, with the king of the Arabs, with whom he united his forces. This was probably one of his brothers, all of whom Rollin supposes settled in Arabia, and lived near enough their brother to lend him succours, or to receive his assistance. Thus Nimrod, the rebellious descendant of the venerable Noah, in the language of Moses, *began to be mighty upon the earth*; that is, he formed settlements, subdued his neighbours, united different nations under his authority, and erected them into a state of considerable extent; which, in succeeding ages, by new acquisitions, expanded into one of the most extensive and powerful empires that ever existed.

Allured, it is probable, by the fruitfulness and beauty of the vale of Shinar, and especially by the numerous and important advantages presented to his penetrating and sagacious mind by the situation of Babel, which, from the confusion of tongues, had, it is generally believed, been resigned to desolation and silence, he took possession of the deserted city, and made it the capital of his empire. "The beginning of his kingdom," says the sacred writer, "was Babel." He was the first that ventured to people it after the dispersion; the first to finish the city and enclose it with walls: but daring as he certainly was, he did not presume to expose himself, and his new subjects, to the

wrath of heaven, by ordering the tower to be finished. The city of Babylon, the foundations of which were laid by the builders of the tower, and probably consisted of a few houses for the accommodation of the workmen, or, perhaps, by Nimrod himself in the vicinity of Babel, was greatly beautified and enlarged by Semiramis, the wife of Ninus, the son and successor of Nimrod. But it rose to the zenith of its glory in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, who proudly claimed it as his own creation: "Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty*?"

This magnificent city, the capital or beginning of Nimrod's kingdom, stood on a large plain, in a deep and rich soil, of a quadrangular form, and divided almost into two equal parts by the river Euphrates. The walls were built of brick cemented with bitumen, with which the soil seems to have been saturated; their height was fifty cubits, and the breadth so great, that chariots, drawn by four horses, might pass one another on the top of them without danger. These prodigious walls embraced a circuit of about forty miles; and are said to have been finished in one year by the hands of two hundred thousand workmen. They were strengthened with two hundred and fifty towers, ten feet higher than the walls. Twenty-five gates of solid brass on every side of the great square, terminated an equal number of streets, which ran in straight lines from one side of the city to the other; so that the whole number of the streets were fifty, each fifteen miles long, of which twenty-five went one way, and twenty-five the other, directly crossing each other at right angles†. On each side of the river was a key, and a high wall built of brick and bitumen, of the same thickness as the walls that went round the city. In these walls, over against every street that led to the river, were gates of brass, and from them descents, by steps, to the river, for the conveniency of the inhabitants who were obliged

* Dan. iv. 30.

† Rollin, Prideaux, Bochart.

to pass the river in boats, before the building of the bridge. These brazen gates were always open in the day time, and shut in the night.

A beautiful and magnificent bridge was, in process of time, constructed across the river, a furlong in length, and thirty feet in breadth, adorned at each end with a splendid palace. But the most wonderful effort perhaps of imperial wealth and power, was the lake which the monarchs of Babylon caused to be dug near Sippara, to the west of the city, to secure it from the dreadful effects of the periodical inundations. This immense artificial bason was forty miles square, one hundred and sixty in compass, and thirty-five feet deep, according to Herodotus, and seventy-five according to Megasthenes. Into this lake was the whole river turned by a canal cut from the west side of it, till they had finished two artificial channels at a very considerable distance above the town, to receive the inundations of the river, occasioned by the periodical melting of the snow on the mountains of Armenia, which turned the course of these waters into the Tigris, before they reached Babylon.

On the west side of the river, within the city, near the new palace, rose, in majestic grandeur, the celebrated pensile gardens, terrace above terrace, sustained by vast arches raised upon other arches, till they equalled in height the walls of the city. These terraces were crowned with trees of the largest size, vigorously flourishing on the deep mould with which the arches were covered, and beautified with every plant and flower that was proper for a garden of pleasure.

Near the old palace, on the opposite side of the river, stood the temple of Belus; in the middle of which, was a prodigious tower, of a quadrangular form, half a mile in circuit, and a furlong in height. This astonishing structure is supposed, by many writers, to have been the celebrated tower of Babel, the building of which was interrupted by the confusion of tongues. The riches of this temple, in statues, tables, censers, cups, and other sacred vessels, all of massy gold, were immense. Among

other images, was one of forty feet high, which weighed a thousand Babylonish talents. According to the calculation of Diodorus, this temple contained six thousand three hundred and fifty Attic talents of gold, which amounts to more than twenty-one millions sterling.

Such was ancient Babylon, over the splendour, and magnificence, and extent of which, the heart of Nebuchadnezzar exulted, while he looked down upon it from the highest terrace of his pensile gardens, and his lips exclaimed, "Is not this great Babylon which I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty." Exactly according with the truth of ancient history, are the accounts which the prophets of the Lord have left us of the greatness and strength of that haughty mistress of the nations, and oppressor of the whole earth. Isaiah pronounces her "the glory of kingdoms; the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency; the golden city; the lady of kingdoms*." Jeremiah speaks of her "broad walls," and her "brazen gates;" and calls her, by a most significant figure, "the hammer of the whole earth;" and a "destroying mountain which destroyed all the earth;" and says, "she was abundant in treasures, and dwelling on many waters;" and in another passage, he describes her as "Jehovah's battle-ax and weapons of war, with which he brake in pieces the nations, and destroyed kingdoms†."

This great and powerful city was so strong, both by nature and art, its inhabitants were so numerous and warlike, and its resources so many and various, that it was considered as impregnable. It seemed, says Orosius, to be almost equally incredible, that it could be built by the hands, or destroyed by the prowess of mortals. The Babylonians themselves, were of the same opinion; they boasted that Babylon should remain the mistress of the nations till the end of all things. "Thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever, so that thou didst not lay these things to thy heart, neither didst remem-

* Is. xiv. 4, and xlvii. 5, 7.

† Jer. l. 23, and li. 20.

ber the latter end of it.—Thou saidst in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children*.” But the event at last, proved that the prophets had not foretold the destruction of that splendid and powerful city in vain. The dreadful calamities which Babylon had brought upon so many cities and nations, to gratify her inordinate ambition, burst at last upon her own head, and overwhelmed her in complete and irretrievable ruin. The fearful threatenings of the prophet were literally fulfilled; “Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees’ excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah: it shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation; neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there: but wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there; and the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged†.” The Persians, says Strabo, destroyed a part of the city; time, and the carelessness of the Macedonians, destroyed another part; but the principal cause of its decline was, the building of Seleucia, about forty miles above Babylon, by Seleucus Nicanor, who is said to have erected this new city from dislike to the Babylonians, and to have drawn five hundred thousand persons from Babylon, for the peopling of his new city.

This rival seat of empire, by degrees robbed Babylon of its glory and greatness, and even of its very name; for it is expressly called Babylon in some ancient authors. In the time of Curtius, it had declined a fourth part; it was reduced to desolation in the days of Pliny; and when Jerome flourished, it was turned into a park, in which the kings of Persia were accustomed to take the diversion of hunting.

* Is. xlvii. 7, 8.

† Is. xiii. 19, &c.

In the middle of the sixteenth century, the ruins of ancient Babylon were visited by Rauwolf, a German physician, who gives the following mournful, but instructive description of it. By a small village on the Euphrates, called Eulego, or Felugo, is the seat of the old Babylon, a day and a half's journey from Bagdat. The lands about it are so dry and desolate, that one may justly doubt the fertility of it, and the greatness of this city, if the vast ruins still to be seen did not banish all suspicion. There are still standing some arches of a bridge over the river, which is here half a mile broad, and exceeding deep: these arches are built of brick, and wonderfully compacted. A quarter of a mile beneath the village, in a plain, are the fallen ruins of a castle, and beyond that the ruins of the tower of Babel, half a German mile in compass, which is now a receptacle of serpents and venemous creatures. A little above the fall of the Tigris into the Euphrates, is a city now called Trax, formerly called Apamea. All that travel over these plains, will find vast numbers of the ruins of very ancient great and lofty buildings, arched towers, and other similar structures of wonderful architecture. There is only one tower, which is called Daniel's, still entire and inhabited, from whence may be seen all the ruins of this once vast city; which sufficiently demonstrate the truth of what ancient writers have said of its greatness, by the vastness of their extent.

A noble Roman, Peter Della Valle, in the year 1616, visited what are thought to be the ruins of ancient Babylon. In the middle of a vast and level plain, about a quarter of a league from the Euphrates, he found a heap of ruined buildings, like a huge mountain, the materials of which are so confounded together, that he knew not what to make of it. Its situation and form corresponded with that pyramid which Strabo calls the tower of Belus, and is, in all probability, the tower of Nimrod in Babylon, or Babel, as the place is still called. No marks of ruins appeared without that huge mass, to convince him that so great a city as Babylon had ever stood

there; all he could discover within fifty or sixty yards of it, being only the remains, here and there, of some foundations of buildings; and the country round so flat and level, that it is difficult to believe it should be chosen for the situation of so great and noble a city as Babylon, or that it ever contained any remarkable buildings. Della Valle, however, was astonished to find so many remains of that renowned city, after the lapse of four thousand years since it was built, and that Diodorus Siculus tells us it was reduced almost to nothing in his time.

Tavernier, a very celebrated traveller, discovered, at the parting of the Tigris, a little way from Bagdat, the foundations of a city which seemed to be a large league in compass. Some of the walls were yet standing, upon which six coaches might go abreast; they were made of burnt brick, ten feet square, and three feet thick. The chronicles of the country say, they are the remains of ancient Babylon; but Tavernier imagined they were the ruins of Nebuchadnezzar's palace, or of the tower of Babel. He adopts the opinion of the Arabs, and conceives them to be rather the remains of some tower built by one of their princes for a beacon to assemble his subjects in time of war; and this conjecture, in all probability, approaches nearest to the truth.

It is not one of the least remarkable circumstances related of Babylon, that we cannot learn, either from ancient writers, or modern travellers, where this renowned city stood, only in general, that it was situated in the province of Chaldea, upon the river Euphrates, considerably above its confluence with the Tigris. "Travellers have guessed, from the great ruins they have discovered in several parts of this country, that in this or that place Babylon once stood; but when we come to examine nicely the places they mention, we only learn that they were certainly in the wrong, and have mistaken the ruins of Seleucia, or some other great town*.

* Salmon's Mod. Hist.

the ruins of Babylon are now so much effaced, that hardly any vestiges of them remain to point out the situation*.”

By these accounts we see, (to use the words of Newton), how punctually time hath fulfilled the predictions of the prophets concerning Babylon. When it was converted into a chase for wild beasts to feed and breed there, then were exactly accomplished the words of the prophets, that “the wild beasts of the desert, with the wild beasts of the islands, should dwell there, and cry in their desolate houses.” One part of the country was overflowed by the river’s having been turned out of its course, and never restored again to its former channel, and thence became boggy and marshy, so that it might literally be said to be “a possession for the bittern, and pools of water.” Another part is described as dry and naked, and barren of every thing, so that thereby was also fulfilled another prophecy, which seemed, in some measure, to contradict the former. “Her cities are a desolation, a dry land, and a wilderness, a land wherein no man dwelleth, neither doth any son of man pass thereby.” The place thereabout is represented as overrun with serpents, scorpions, and all sorts of venomous and unclean creatures; so that “their houses are full of doleful creatures, and dragons cry in their pleasant palaces: and Babylon is become heaps, a dwelling place for dragons, an astonishment and an hissing, without an inhabitant.” For all these reasons, “neither can the Arabian pitch his tent there, neither can the shepherds make their folds there.” And when we find that modern travellers cannot now certainly discover the spot of ground whereon that imperial city once was situate, we may very properly say, How is Babylon become a desolation among the nations? Every purpose of the Lord hath he performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation without an inhabitant: and the expression is no less true than sublime, that “the Lord of hosts hath swept it with the besom of destruction†.”

* Hanway’s Trav. vol. 4.

† Newton’s Dissert. vol. 1. p. 176.

The second city built by Nimrod in the land of Shinar, was Erech, which, under the name of Arecca, Ptolomy places on the lowest bend of the common channel of the Tigris and Euphrates. The Archevites mentioned by Ezra, are thought to be some of its inhabitants that were removed to Samaria*.

The true situation of Accad, the third city in the kingdom of Nimrod, cannot now be determined with any degree of certainty. Accad is written by the Seventy interpreters, Archad; some faint traces of which, are supposed to be preserved in the name of the river Argades; which, according to Ctesius, runs near Settace, a town at some distance from the Tigris, in the country of Sittacene, between Babylon and Susa.

The last of the cities belonging to the kingdom of Nimrod, and lying in the land of Shinar, mentioned by the sacred writer, is Calne. In the prophecies of Isaiah, it is written with little variation, Calnoh; and in Ezekiel Channe. The prophets Isaiah and Amos, both represent it as a place of considerable importance in their times. It is said by the Chaldee interpreters, and also by Eusebuis and Jerome, to be the same with Ctesiphon, a city on the Tigris, about three miles distant from Seleucia, and for some time the capital of the Parthian dominions. This opinion seems to be fully confirmed by the name Chalonitis, which the Greeks gave to the surrounding country; which is evidently formed from Chalne or Chalno, or by a mixture of both, from Chalone. And since we are expressly told by Ammianus Marcellinus, that Pacorus, a king of the Parthians, changed its name to Ctesiphon, we reasonably suppose, from the name of the adjacent country, Chalonitis, that its ancient name was Chalne or Chalone.

These four cities, all situate in the land of Shinar, with their respective territories, seem to have constituted the original kingdom of Nimrod. The words of Moses certainly countenance this idea; "And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calne." Babel was the

* Ezra iv. 9.

first city which he built, and the seat of his government ; but the other three cities, belonged not less than Babel to the beginning of his kingdom.

By the irruption of Nimrod, at the head of the Cushites into the lower parts of Shinar, Ashur, one of the descendants of Shem, who seem to have held it, if not by the allotment of Noah their common superior, at least by pre-occupancy, was obliged to retire, and seek new settlements for himself and his people. He ascended the Tigris, and took possession of the country which was afterwards known by his name. The words of Moses are ; “ Out of this land went Ashur, and builded Neneveh*.” Bochart contends for a different version. “ I am persuaded,” says that excellent writer, “ that the term Ashur is not in this place, the name of a man, but of a country. —The words therefore in the original, are to be thus interpreted, He (Nimrod,) went out of this land into Assyria.” In this opinion, he has been followed by Dr Wells and others, who have been too easily prejudiced against the common version. He endeavours to support his opinion by the following arguments: 1. It would be improper to introduce the name of Ashur, the son of Shem, in the genealogy of the sons of Ham. 2. It is contrary to order, to state the operations of Ashur, before he mentioned his birth. 3. It was not peculiar to Ashur, and therefore not remarkable, that he should go out of the land of Shinar in quest of new settlements, since the far greatest part of mankind did the same. 4. The words being taken in reference to Nimrod, the connection between the tenth and eleventh verses is preserved. The beginning of this kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calne, in the land of Shinar ; but afterwards, he extended his dominions by invading and reducing Assyria to his yoke, and built Nineveh and three other cities to secure his conquests.

These objections are of little importance, and by no means warrant the proposed alteration. It is a sufficient answer, that

* Gen. x. 11.

the history of Ashur is not given here, but the history of Nimrod. He invaded the possessions of Ashur, and forced him to relinquish his original property; and the accounts of each are so connected, that one must be mentioned with the other, to complete the history. No writer, sacred or common, always follows the precise order of events. In the same book, Moses gives us an account of Canaan, the son of Ham, antecedent to the genealogy of his family, which follows in the next chapter*. Nor was the emigration from Shinar common to all mankind; for only a small part of mankind were concerned in the compulsory dispersion: besides, Bochart omits a principal and important part of the passage. The sacred writer does not say merely, that Ashur went forth out of the land, but that he went forth and built cities; a circumstance by no means common to all. These cities rose, in the progress of time, to great renown; it was therefore of consequence to mention their founder, and the reason why they were built. The connection between the tenth and eleventh verses is equally clear by the common version: Nimrod at the head of his army, seized on the province of Babylonia, and erected it into a kingdom; and Ashur the original possessor, disdaining to wear his ignominious yoke, retired into Assyria; and to secure his recent acquisitions from the aggression of his ambitious enemy, builded Nineveh and other cities mentioned in the sacred text.

Bochart adds, that Nimrod must have been in possession of Assyria; for it was called the land of Nimrod. His argument is founded on a passage in Micah, which runs in these words; "And they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof†." He supposes, that the land of Assyria and the land of Nimrod mentioned by the prophet, are the same region. But this is to charge the inspired writer with a very unnecessary repetition; and with a redundancy not common in the sacred writings.

* Gen. ix. x.

† Mic. v. 6.

By the land of Assur, is plainly meant the region of Assyria; but by the land of Nimrod, is signified the country of Babylonia, which was the true and only land of Nimrod. In order to understand the purport of the prophecy, we should consider the time when it was uttered. Micah is foretelling the ruin of the Assyrian empire, of which Babylonia by conquest, had been made a part. But the Babylonians were, at this time, endeavouring to throw off the yoke of Nineveh, and establish an independent government. As, however, they made a part of the Assyrian empire, they were to share in its calamities. To these events the prophecy alludes; in which two nations and two different regions are described. We may therefore be assured, that the land of Assyria and the land of Nimrod, were two distinct countries*.

Ashur, probably imitating the policy of his dangerous competitor, built four cities for the accommodation and defence of his descendants; the first of which was Nineveh, the capital of his kingdom. This powerful city stood on the east side of the Tigris, not far from the river Lycus, one of its tributary streams; but on which side of the Lycus it lay, cannot now be discovered. The prediction of Nahum, that Nineveh should be so completely destroyed that future ages should search in vain for the spot which it once covered, has been fulfilled in all its extent. "With an overflowing flood, he will make an utter end of the place thereof†." Ancient geographers inform us of another city of this name, which stood on the Euphrates, and was probably built by Nimrod in honour of his son. But Nineveh, so frequently mentioned in Scripture, lay near the Tigris; and to this last the following observations refer. Strabo affirms, that Nineveh was larger than Babylon itself; an assertion confirmed by Diodorus, who makes that city sixty miles in compass, while Strabo makes Babylon only about forty-eight. It is therefore with justice that the inspired writer calls Nineveh "an exceeding great city of three days'

* Bryant's An.

† Nahum i. 8.

journey." This account some interpreters refer not to the length, but to the compass of the city ; allowing twenty miles for a day's journey, which accords with the common estimation of those times. But the phrase, " Jonas began to enter into the city a day's journey," seems rather to intimate, that the measure of three days' journey is to be understood of the length, not of the compass of Nineveh. Hence it may be easily supposed, that agreeably to the statement of the prophet, it contained " more than sixscore thousand persons that could not discern between their right hand and their left hand *;" for, supposing this to be understood of infants under two years old, these generally, as Bochart observes, make at least the fifth part of a city. If this proportion be just, the inhabitants of Nineveh would not be more than six hundred thousand ; which is not more than Seleucia contained in the days of Pliny, and not so many as has been numbered in the capital of the British empire.

Nineveh was not more celebrated for her extent, and the number of her inhabitants, than for the strength of her fortifications. The walls were an hundred feet high, and so broad that three carts might go abreast on the top. They were strengthened with fifteen hundred turrets, each of them two hundred feet high. But though it was deemed impregnable, the wickedness of its inhabitants provoked the most High to deliver it into the hands of Astyages, king of the Medes, who reduced it to a heap of ruins.

Rehoboth, the second city of Assyria mentioned by Moses, was supposed to have been seated on the Tigris, about the mouth of the river Lycus ; but no certain traces of it can be discovered.

Calah was probably the capital city of the country Calachene, which, according to Strabo, lay somewhere about the head of the river Lycus. Ptolomy also mentions a country which was named Calacine, in the same quarter. And as

* Jonah iv. 11.

Pliny mentions a people called *Classitæ*, through whose country the Lycus runs, it is probable, that *Classitæ* is a corruption for *Caluchitæ*. This city is in all probability the Halah mentioned in the 2d book of Kings, to which Salmanassar transplanted some of the ten tribes of Israel.

Resen, the last city mentioned by Moses, lay between Nineveh and Calah, and consequently stood on the Tigris. Geographers mention two cities in Mesopotamia: one called *Rhisina*, between Edessa and mount Masius; the other *Rhesena*, between the rivers Chaboras and Saocoras. But as neither of these corresponds to the description of Resen given by Moses, the city of *Larissa* mentioned by Xenophon, has been regarded as the ancient city of Resen. It stands on the Tigris, and was a city of great strength and extent, eight miles in compass, and surrounded by a wall an hundred feet high, and twenty-five feet broad. *Larissa* is a Greek name, supposed to be given by Xenophon and his associates, instead of *Laresen*, that is, the city of Resen, which that renowned captain mistook for *Larissa*, the name of several Grecian cities, with which he was familiar*.

CHAP. VI.

OF CHALDEA, UR, HARAN, AND CANAAN.

THE sacred historian, having taken a rapid view of the original settlements which the sons of Noah formed in the countries allotted to them after the deluge, proceeds to the history of a family that made a considerable figure among the Babylonians in those remote ages. This family, in whom, by the distinguishing favour of God, all nations were in future times to be blessed, originally lived in Ur of the Chaldees, till near

* Bocharti Phaleg. Well's Geog. vol. 1. p. 127.

the close of the life of Terah, the father of Abraham. To ascertain with greater accuracy the situation of this city, so celebrated for being the birth-place of Abraham, the friend of God, and the father of the chosen seed, it is necessary to make a few remarks on the country of the Chaldees.

Chaldea, the native country of Abraham, was bounded by Mesopotamia on the north, Susiana on the east, the Persian gulf on the south, and Arabia Deserta on the west. Its capital city was Babylon; hence, called by Isaiah the prophet, "the glory of the Chaldees' excellency." From the name of the capital, the whole country was afterwards called Babylonia. Some writers, however, contend, that Chaldea properly so called, was only a province of Babylonia; while others make Babylonia a province of Chaldea, namely, that part which lay about the city of Babylon. The name Babylon is unquestionably derived from the Hebrew term Babel; and, that the city was built near the place where the tower of Babel was begun, seems to be equally certain. The name Chaldea, is of more doubtful origin; but, since the Chaldeans are called in Hebrew, Chasdim, it is commonly supposed they derived their name from Chesed, one of the sons of Nahor, the brother of Abraham*; for, Chesed will regularly make the plural, Chesadim, or with a small variation, Chasdim. From this term, instead of *Χασδαῖοι* Chasdæi, the Greeks formed the softer word *Χαλδαῖοι* Chaldæi†. It is therefore probable, that the Chaldees derived their name from Chesed; but the true reason of the derivation, is lost in the deep obscurity of the postdiluvian age.

In the sacred books, the term Chaldea is sometimes taken in a larger sense than in the writings of the Greeks and Romans. It is evident from the words of Stephen the proto-martyr, that the country of Chaldea embraced a part of Mesopotamia; "The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran,

* Gen. xxii. 22.

† Well's Geog. vol. 1. p. 123.

and said unto him, get thee out of this country, --- then came he out of the land of the Chaldees, and dwelt in Charran." Hence it is evident, that the region of Mesopotamia, where the patriarch resided before he removed to Charran, must be included under the name of Chaldea. This is considered by some writers as a confirmation of the opinion, that the name of Chaldea was originally derived from Chesed the son of Nahor, the brother of Abraham. It is plainly intimated in the sacred text, that, when Terah with his son Abraham, and his grandson Lot, the son of the deceased Haran, left Ur of the Chaldees, Nahor his other son, remained in his native country. But Nahor was the father of Chesed, who, it is conjectured, was eminently skilled in the science of astronomy, the study of which, was prosecuted in Babylonia from the first settlement of the province, with great diligence and success. Under his instructions, and fired by his example, his descendants, the Chasdim, are supposed to have risen to great eminence among the Babylonian philosophers. And hence, Ur, the native town of Chesed and his family, might be called by way of honour, Ur of the Chaldees, that is, Ur where the Chasdim, so famous for their attainments in astronomical science, reside. From this circumstance, it is not unreasonable to suppose, that a people so devoted to science as the Babylonians were, might assume the name of Chaldees, in honour of Chesed, their most renowned instructor.

This opinion concerning the skill of Chesed and his descendants in astronomical science, is supposed to be confirmed from the very name of the place where they lived. Ur in the Hebrew tongue, denotes light; and hence, the place where the Chasdim lived, might be named Ur of the Chasdim, from their studying there with extraordinary diligence and success, the motions of the heavenly bodies*.

From this statement it appears, that Ur was situate in the eastern part of Mesopotamia, which was sometimes included

* Eochart. Well's Geog. vol. 1. p. 130.

under the name of Chaldea. This position agrees both with the words of Stephen already quoted, and the writings of Ammianus Marcellinus; who mentions a city of this name, lying between the Tigris and the city of Nisibis. Some writers place the native town of Terah and Abraham, near the lake of Babylon, where once stood the city Urchoa, supposed by them to be the same with Ur. But the lakes of Babylon, and by consequence the city Urchoa, were on this side of the river Euphrates; while Joshua says expressly, that Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nahor, dwelt on the other side of the flood (or Euphrates) in old time*. Again, from Ur in Mesopotamia, near the Tigris, the way to Canaan, whither Terah intended to go, was directly by Haran; but if he had resided by the lakes of Babylonia, his direct way had been through Arabia Deserta; or if to avoid that inhospitable desert, he had chosen a more northerly rout, still his direct road lay considerably south from Haran.

Haran is, in the Septuagint and in the New Testament, rendered Charran, and in common authors Charraë. This city was built by Terah, and named Haran, in memory of his deceased son, the father of Lot. It stood in the west, or north-west part of Mesopotamia, on a river known to the Greek writers by the same name, which flows into the river Chaboras, one of the tributary streams of the Euphrates. In more recent times, it became famous among the Romans for the total defeat of their army by the Parthians, and the death of Crassus their general, who was killed in the battle.

In obedience to the command of God, who appeared to Abraham in Mesopotamia, Terah, with all his family except Nahor, left the land of his fathers, and proceeded to Haran, on his way to Canaan, the future inheritance of his remote descendants. In that city Terah ended his days; and after his death, Abraham, in consequence of a second admonition, prosecuted his journey to the land of promise.

* Josh. xxiv. 2.

The land of Canaan is, on many accounts, entitled to more particular consideration; but chiefly because it was the residence of the chosen seed, and the theatre of our redemption.

When the Maker of heaven and earth appointed to the nations their inheritance, the country which is bounded on the west by the Mediterranean, on the east by the river Jordan, the lake Asphaltites and the sea of Tiberias, on the north by the mountain Antilibanus, and on the south by Idumea, fell to the lot of Canaan, one of the sons of Ham. It extends about two hundred miles in length and eighty in breadth. From the grandson of Noah, by whom it was peopled, it was first called the land of Canaan. It has since been distinguished by other names: as the land of Promise; the Holy Land; Judea, from the tribe of Judah, which possessed its finest and most fertile division; and Palestine, from the Philistines, by whom a great part of it was inhabited.

The descendants of Canaan, the original possessor of this highly interesting country, are thus enumerated by Moses: "Canaan begat Sidon his first born, and Heth, and the Jebusite, and the Amorite, and the Girgashite, and the Hivite, and the Arkite, and the Senite, and the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite." All these families were settled at first within the limits of Canaan; but the increase of population, or what is more likely, the spirit of emigration and adventure, which is strongly felt in countries where much land remains to be occupied, soon carried them beyond the prescribed limits of their paternal inheritance. The original extent of the land of Canaan, is accurately stated by Moses in these words: "The border of the Canaanites was from Sidon, as thou comest to Gerar, unto Gaza; and as thou goest unto Sodom, and Gomorrah, and Admah, and Zeboim, even unto Lasha*." But the sacred historian informs us, that several Canaanitish families, in process of time, settled in the circumjacent countries: his words are, "And afterwards were the fa-

* Gen. x. 19.

milies of the Canaanites spread abroad ;” namely, beyond their original bounds, which he then proceeds to describe.

The true situation of Sidon, the first born of Canaan, is clearly determined by the famous city of that name. Sidon was one of the most ancient cities in the world, and long the wealthiest and the greatest of which Phenicia could boast. It was very strong both by nature and art. On the north side, a citadel, built on an inaccessible rock, and environed on all sides by the sea ; and on the south side, another fort defended the mouth of the harbour. Secured on all sides against the assaults of her enemies, and enriched by the extensive commerce which she carried on with the surrounding nations of Asia and Europe, her inhabitants lived in profound security, and indulged, without restraint, in every voluptuous gratification. So great was their luxury, that *to live after the manner of the Sidonians*, became a sort of proverbial phrase for living quietly and securely in ease and pleasure*. But their wealth and luxury do not seem, at least for several ages, to have enervated their minds, and destroyed their powers of exertion and habits of industry ; for we know, from the testimony of an inspired writer, that in the days of Solomon “ none were skilled to hew timber like the Zidonians.” They are represented by writers, both sacred and profane, as excellent artificers in several other professions or trades ; and in proof of this fact, many of them were retained in the pay of Solomon, and employed as his principal workmen in building the temple of Jehovah.

Though the Tyrians were accustomed to boast of the great antiquity of their city, it cannot be doubted that Sidon can trace her history to a still remoter date ; for in the same chapter where the prophet Isaiah records the vain boast of the Tyrians, he expressly calls Tyre the daughter of Sidon† ; by which he means, that* the Tyrians were a colony of the Sidonians. Indeed Tyre rose, by degrees, to a height of greatness and splendour, which her illustrious parent was never able to

* Judg. xviii. 7.

† Is. xxiii. 7, 12.

reach ; yet it is evident, from ancient writers, that she was for several ages greatly her inferior. The former was distinguished by the name of the strong city so early as the days of Joshua ; but in the very same passage, the latter receives the more significant and honourable title of “ the great Zidon,” to intimate, that she was then the capital of Phenicia. Nor ought it to be forgotten, that Homer never mentions Tyre in any part of his writings, while he often celebrates the ingenuity and industry of the Sidonians*. Many years after Sidon was built, says an ancient writer, the Sidonians being attacked by the king of Ascalon, escaped in their ships, and laid the foundations of Tyre, sometime before the destruction of Troy†. This event happened, according to Josephus, about two hundred and forty years before the building of Solomon’s temple. But after the taking of Sidon by the Persians, the city of Tyre rapidly increased in wealth and greatness, and became, in a short time, the capital of Phenicia, and the mart of the whole earth. At the time it was besieged by Alexander, it was, in every respect, the greatest commercial city in the world. Including ancient Tyre, it was nineteen miles in circuit : the houses were spacious, magnificent, consisting of several stories, and higher than those of Rome. Pre-eminent in riches and splendour, rose the magnificent temples of Olympian Jove, Astarte, and other deities adored by the Tyrians, constructed by Hiram, adorned with pillars of gold, glittering with precious stones, and enriched with the splendid offerings of many kings. The city was defended by a wall an hundred and fifty feet in height, of huge stones cemented with lime. Two harbours received its innumerable vessels, one looking towards Sidon, the other to Egypt. Strabo places it nearly at the distance of twenty-five miles from Sidon, its renowned parent. The inhabitants of Tyre, like the Sidonians from whom they derived their origin, were distinguished for the acuteness and versatility of their genius. They were skilled in arithmetic

* Iliad, b. 23. l. 743. Odys. b. 15. l. 114.

† Trogus.

and astronomy : but in the mechanical arts they were scarcely equalled, certainly not surpassed, by any people. For the brilliant colour known to the ancients by the name of the Tyrian purple, the kings of the east were indebted to their ingenuity. The fabrics produced in the Sidonian looms rivalled the fine linen of Egypt ; while the productions of the artificer in iron, in brass, and in crystal, were not less remarkable for the beauty of the device than for the delicacy of the execution. It is therefore, a true account which the inspired prophet has given of the greatness and splendour of Tyre. Isaiah calls her, “ a mart of nations ; the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth ;” and Ezekiel, who alluding to old Tyre, places her “ at the entry of the sea ;” and in another passage, to the new city, “ in the heart of the seas,” recounts the various nations that carried on a lucrative commerce with the Tyrians.

But the pride and luxury which her unrivalled power and riches produced among all ranks of her citizens, and above all, the cruel and unbrotherly triumph in which the Tyrians indulged, when the chosen people of God yielded to the arms of Nebuchadnezzar, and were led away captive beyond the rivers of Babylon, excited against them the displeasure of Heaven. As a just punishment of their crimes, continental Tyre was taken and destroyed by the Chaldeans ; and remained in a state of ruin and desolation seventy years, a term of equal duration with the captivity of Judah, whom they had so barbarously insulted in the hour of her distress. At the end of that period, Tyre recovered her wealth and splendour ; an event which the prophet Zechariah describes in these striking terms : “ And Tyrus did build herself a strong hold, and heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets *.” But with her commerce and prosperity, her wickedness returned ; and the judgments of God quickly followed. In fulfilment of ancient prophecies which sealed her doom, and even

* Zech. ix, 3.

described the manner of her future destruction, Alexander besieged, and took, and set the city on fire; but so great was the forbearance of Heaven, so numerous and efficient were her resources, that in the short period of nineteen years she was able to withstand the fleets and armies of Antigonus, and to sustain a siege of fifteen months, before she was taken. But the time of her final desolation at length arrived; and nothing could divert or retard the full accomplishment of the divine purpose long before expressed by an inspired prophet: "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up: and they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers; I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock: it shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea, for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God *." To shew the certainty of this fearful sentence, it is repeated, "I will make thee like the top of a rock; thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon; thou shalt be built no more; for I the Lord have spoken it, saith the Lord God." And again; "I will make thee a terror, and thou shalt be no more: though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again, saith the Lord God †." The exact fulfilment of this prediction in all its parts, is attested by so many travellers of unimpeachable veracity, who beheld and examined the ruins of this once great, and powerful, and splendid city, that the most stubborn unbeliever is awed into silence.

The descendants of Heth, or the Hittites, the second family of Canaan mentioned by Moses, were planted about Hebron, in the southern division of the country. Moses informs us, that Sarah died at Hebron, and "Abraham spake to the sons of Heth" about the purchase of a burying-place; and adds in a subsequent verse, "Abraham stood up and bowed himself to the people of the land, even to the children of Heth;" which sufficiently proves their claim to that part of the family inheri-

* Ezek. xxvi. 3.

† Ezek. xxiii. 3, 4, 5.

tance *. The principal settlements of the Hittites were in the mountainous part of the country; for the Hittites are mentioned with the Jebusites as dwelling in the mountains †.

The city of Hebron was originally called Kirjath Arba, or the city of Arba, a great man among the Anakims ‡. It was a place of great antiquity; for, according to Moses, it was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt, the royal city of the Pharaohs, the ancient kings of Egypt; and by consequence was one of the oldest cities in that kingdom. Hebron was situate among the mountains, on the ridge which runs southward from Jerusalem. It became famous for the long residence of Abraham in its neighbourhood, and for being the burying-place of his family. In succeeding times it was the chosen abode of David during the first seven years of his reign; and is supposed to have been the dwelling-place of Zacharias and Elizabeth, the parents of John the Baptist. Hebron was also one of the cities of refuge, and was given to the tribe of Levi by the appointment of Jehovah. Its name was probably derived from Hebron, one of the sons of Kohath, and grandson of Levi.

In the immediate neighbourhood of this city, was the plain of Mamre, called in another passage of Scripture, the vale of Hebron. It lies on the south side of the town, at the distance of about two miles; and is represented as remarkably fertile and pleasant; a circumstance sufficiently attested by the protracted residence of the venerable patriarch, who had a right to select the richest pastures of Canaan. His tent was pitched under the shade of a spreading oak, from whence, reposing at his ease, he could see his flocks and his herds feeding at large on the surrounding hills. But what chiefly recommended Mamre and its umbrageous oak to him, was the vision of angels with which he was honoured, on their way to execute the vengeance of God on the cities of the plain: a circumstance which has rendered that fertile vale memorable to every succeeding age.

* Gen. xxiii. 7.

† Josh. xi. 3.

‡ Josh. xiv. 15.

Next to the Hittites, in the same tract of country, were planted the sons of Jebus, who seem to have been its original inhabitants. The capital city of their possessions was called Jebus, in honour of their venerable founder; a name which it afterwards exchanged for Jerusalem, one of the most celebrated on the records of history. These facts are explicitly stated by the inspired writer: "And David and all Israel went to Jerusalem which is Jebus; where the Jebusites were the inhabitants of the land *." This city is first mentioned in Scripture under the name of Salem, which is by interpretation Peace; the capital of the kingdom over which Melchizedek reigned. The name by which it was afterwards known, seems to be compounded of both Jebus and Salem, and to have been originally written Jebussalem, but for the sake of the sound afterwards softened into Jerusalem. In Hebrew the word assumes the dual form, and is commonly read Jerusalaim; probably to denote, that the city consisted of two parts, of which one was the old city, where Melchizedek and the Jebusites dwelt; and the other the new city built by David and his successors on the throne of Israel and Judah, which for its extent might be regarded as a new city, or new Jerusalem. This term, the Greeks, adapting it to their language, according to their usual practice, changed into Hierosolyma, which literally signifies the sacred city.

The old city founded by the Jebusites before Abraham arrived in Canaan, is styled by some writers *the city of Melchizedek*, not because he was the founder, but because it was the seat of his government. This ancient city was so strongly fortified both by nature and art, that the people of Israel could not drive out the Jebusites, its original inhabitants, but were reduced to live with them at Jerusalem. The armies of Israel indeed seized the city; but the Jebusites kept possession of the strong fort which defended the town, till the reign of David, who took it by storm, and changed its name to the city of David, to signify

* 1 Chron. xi. 4.

the importance of the conquest, and to perpetuate the memory of the event. Having chosen Jerusalem for the place of his residence and the capital of his kingdom, he adorned the fortress with a royal palace for his own accommodation, and a variety of other buildings; which, from the continual additions made to them in succeeding reigns, increased to the size of a considerable city, and covered nearly the whole of mount Zion. The largeness of the city of David may be inferred from the expression of the sacred historian; "David built round about from Millo and inward *." This passage, and particularly the word Millo, has greatly exercised the genius and divided the sentiments of commentators; and is therefore entitled to more particular notice. That Millo was situate in the city of David, the inspired historian expressly asserts †: and by consequence, it must either have been upon mount Zion or in its immediate vicinity. It is worthy of notice, that the inspired writer of David's history could not allude to Millo itself, which was not then in existence, but to the place where it afterwards stood; for Millo was not built till the succeeding reign ‡. It seems to have been a public building, where the king and his princes met in council about affairs of state: for in the passage already quoted from the first book of Kings, it is connected with the house of the Lord and the royal palace. The words of the historian are; "And this is the reason of the levy (or tax) which king Solomon raised; for to build the house of the Lord, and his own house, and Millo, and the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, and Megiddo, and Gezer." But every ground of hesitation is removed by the sacred writer of the second book of Kings, who calls it expressly "the house of Millo §." That it was a public building, in one of whose apartments the council of state met to deliberate upon public affairs, is rendered extremely probable by one of the kings of Judah losing his life there by the hands of his princes; for we are told, that "the servants of king Joash arose and made a conspiracy, and

* 2 Sam. v. 9. † 2 Chron. xxxii. 5. ‡ 1 Kings ix. 15. § 2 Kings xii. 20.

slew him in the house of Millo," whither he had probably come to consult with his princes and other principal persons upon some affairs of state.

This interpretation is greatly strengthened by a passage in the book of Judges, which informs us, that "all the men of Shchem gathered together, and all the house of Millo, and went and made Abimelech king." The city of Shechem then had also its house of Millo, and a great number of persons connected with it, whom the sacred writer distinguishes from the men of the city. Now since both were concerned in making Abimelech king, it is natural to conclude, that the men of the city were the inferior inhabitants, and the house of Millo the governors of the place: both of whom on this occasion met in the senate-house, to set the crown upon the head of their favourite.

The house of Millo upon mount Zion, appears to have been a place of great strength, and essentially connected with the defence of Jerusalem; for when Hezekiah discovered that Sennacherib meditated the reduction of Jerusalem, "he strengthened himself, and built up all the wall that was broken, and raised it up to the towers, and another wall without, and repaired Millo in the city of David, and made darts and shields in abundance*." From the intimate connection between the repairing of Millo and the making of darts and other implements of war, it has been conjectured by some writers, that one part of that public building was occupied as an armoury; in which there is nothing improbable.

It is necessary, however, before leaving this part of the subject, to state another opinion that has been advanced concerning Millo, by several men of genius and learning. They suppose that Solomon filled up a deep valley or hollow, that separated the hill of Zion and the site of the ancient city from mount Moriah, upon whose summit he built the temple of Jehovah, and made a plain level road from the one to the other.

* 2 Chron. xxxii, 5.

The execution of this stupendous work they contend, may be inferred from the root of the word Millo, which signifies "to fill up;" and from a passage in 2d Chronicles, where it is said, the king made terraces to the house of the Lord, and to the king's palace*. The word which is here rendered terraces, may be translated as in the margin, stays or supports. But neither of these senses amounts to a sufficient proof, that the terraces were made by filling up the hollow between mount Zion and mount Moriah.

That Solomon planned and executed a noble and magnificent way from the royal palace on mount Zion, to the temple on mount Moriah, which excited the admiration of all that saw it, is attested in plain terms by the sacred writer; "And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house which he had built, --- and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the Lord, there was no more spirit in her†." This passage also proves, that although the declivity on each side was easy, the road was not perfectly level, for Solomon went up an ascent to the house of the Lord. The same circumstance is mentioned in another book, where the sacred writer speaks of "the causeway of the going up‡." And we read, that Joash was slain in the house of Millo, which goes down to Silla. The term Silla, is thought by some learned commentators, to have the same meaning as Messilah, which signifies a causeway or cast up way; and consequently, that between the two mounts Zion and Moriah, were two declivities, one towards the temple or mount Moriah, the other towards the palace or mount Zion. The last is supposed to be the descent of Silla, near which stood the house of Millo.

From this statement it is clear, that the house of Millo stood on the east side of mount Zion, at the upper end of the causeway which goes down to Silla, and the royal palace on the opposite side. When, therefore, the sacred historian says, David built round about from Millo and inward, or as the ori-

* 2 Chron. ix. 11.

† 1 Kings x. 4, 5.

‡ 1 Chron. xxvi. 16.

ginal word may be rendered, "to the house," he seems to intimate, that David built round about from the place where Millo was afterwards erected by Solomon, or where more probably the senate-house, or Millo of the Jebusites had stood, which was pulled down to make room for the more sumptuous edifice of Solomon, to his own house; so that David built from one part of mount Zion, quite round to the opposite point. Hence, the residence of David, even in the reign of that renowned monarch, began to assume the size and splendour of a city, and to be justly entitled to the appellation which it receives from the sacred historian.

About two furlongs from Jerusalem, according to Josephus, lay "the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale," famous for the interview between Abraham and the king of Sodom, and Melchizedek the king of Salem, who went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer and the confederate kings. This valley is supposed to be the king's dale, where Absalom, who had no son to transmit his memory to succeeding ages, erected a pillar, and called it by his own name. Some writers make the king's dale, the same with the valley of Jehoshaphat, lying on the east of Jerusalem, between it and mount Olivet; others place the king's dale, on the south-east part of the city near the king's gardens.

But it is time to return from this long prospective view of Jerusalem, the capital city of the Jebusites, to the remaining settlements of the sons of Canaan. We are informed by several inspired writers, that the Amorities also dwelt in the mountainous region of Canaan, in the immediate neighbourhood of the Hittites and the Jebusites. "The Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites," said the spies in their report to Moses, "dwell in the mountains*." The correctness of this statement was afterwards attested by Joshua (one of these spies), in the history of his wars†; and by his great predecessor, in his last address to the people of Israel, in which he calls the

* Num. xiii, 29.

† Joshua xi. 3.

mountainous tract lying next to Kadesh-barnea, "the mount of the Amorites*." This nation seems to have occupied a considerable extent of country stretching towards the Jordan; for when Chedorlaomer and the confederate kings invaded Canaan, in the days of Abraham, they smote the Amorites, that were in Hazezontamar, the same as Engaddi†, which we know from other parts of sacred Scripture, was placed among the mountains near the river Jordan.

The principal settlements of the Amorites were about Kadesh-barnea, near the wilderness of Paran. The sacred writers mention another Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin, which lay at some distance from Kadesh-barnea. Moses was informed by Jehovah, that the border of their inheritance should turn from the south to the ascent of Akrabbim, and pass on to Zin; "and the going thereof, shall be from the south to Kadesh-barnea." This Kadesh, near the wilderness of Paran, where the hosts of Israel encamped a long time, was the place whither the spies returned from searching the land of Canaan, and where, by their unbelief they brought upon themselves, and the whole nation who gave credit to their report, the judgment of wandering forty years in the deserts of Arabia. But the Israelites came not to Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin, till the last year of that period. From these considerations it appears, that Kadesh in the wilderness of Paran, and Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin, were two distinct places, at a considerable distance from each other‡.

The Girgashite, is the next family mentioned by Moses, who seem to have settled toward the sources of the Jordan. Here, on the eastern side of the sea of Tiberias or Galilee, stood the city of Gergesa; a name probably derived from the Girgashites. This was still a town of some note in the time of our Lord; and the capital of a district, which the Evangelists called the country of the Gergesenes, or, as it is sometimes denominated, the country of the Gadarenes. The town of

* Deut. i. 7.

† 2 Chron. xx. 2.

‡ Well's Geog. vol. I. p. 273.

Gergesa and its territory, became famous in New Testament times, for the miraculous cure of two exceedingly fierce and untameable demoniacs, and the sudden destruction of a numerous herd of swine, into which the devils had been permitted to enter, in the waters of the lake*. Not far from Gergesa, lay the city of Gadara, which Josephus observes, was a very rich place; both these cities belonged to the district of Decapolis, and gave their names to the surrounding country.

The Hivite was planted in the country adjoining to Sidon, in the upper or northern parts of Canaan; for in the book of Judges it is stated, that the Hivites dwelt in mount Lebanon, from mount Baal-hermon unto the entering in of Hamath†.

These were the families that originally peopled the land of Canaan, and their relative situations. But the statement now made, must be understood only in reference to the first settlements of the sons of Canaan; for, in the lapse of ages, they intermingled with one another, or migrated to countries at some considerable distance from their allotted inheritance. Of all these families, the Amorite became the most numerous and powerful: they founded kingdoms on both sides of the Jordan, and frequently gave their name to any one or more of the other nations of Canaan.

The remaining families of Canaan, mentioned by Moses in the tenth chapter of Genesis, in the opinion of Dr Wells, most probably seated themselves within the true borders of Canaan; but in process of time, being dispossessed by the Philistines of at least the greater part of their original inheritance, they were obliged to remove their settlements nearer to one another in some parts of the country, or to leave their native soil in quest of other possessions. The descendants of these families, who were thus driven from the land of Canaan, or blended into one society by the hostile irruption of the Philistines, receive the general name of Canaanites from the

* Mat. viii. 28.

† Judges iii. 3.

sacred writers; because, they could no longer distinguish them by their peculiar names. Thus, when the spies reported, that the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the mountains, and the Canaanites by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan*; the meaning is supposed to be, the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the mountains; but the mixed descendants of the five other families, which can no longer be distinguished, and are therefore designed by the general name of Canaanites, these dwell either in what is left them by the sea, or else, where they have since seated themselves by the coast of Jordan†.

Where these exiled or blended families that originally bore the names of the Arkite, Sinite, Arvadite, Zemarite, and Hamathite, finally settled, it may be difficult to determine. In a subject so obscure, and of an antiquity so remote, we can only hope to approximate the truth. In stating the scanty hints which ancient geographers have left behind them, I shall follow the order of the inspired writer.

The Arkite, who is first mentioned by Moses, is thought to have settled about that part of mount Libanus, where the city of Arce is placed by Ptolomy and other geographers.

The situation of the Sinite, is supposed to be indicated by a city not far from the Arkite settlement, called Sin. The district where it stood, still retained its name in the time of Jerome, who mentions the fact, though the city itself had disappeared by the ravages of war, in ages long anterior to the period when he flourished.

The memory of the Arvadite, seems to be preserved in the little isle of Aradus, on the coast of Syria, whither it is conjectured, the Arvadites fled for safety from the cruelty of their invaders.

The Zemarite probably settled on the neighbouring continent, for geographers find a town on that part of the coast named Simyra, not far from Orthosia: and Eusebius expressly

* Numb. xiii. 29.

† Dr Well's Geog. vol. 1. p. 134, &c.

traces the origin of the Orthosians to the Samareans. The Jewish historian also mentions a city called Semaraim, in the tribe of Benjamin, probably from some of the Zemarites that settled there, within the land of Canaan.

The only remaining family is the Hamathite, or the inhabitants of the land of Hamath, often mentioned in the Scriptures, and whose principal city was called Hamath. This, some understand of Antioch, an ancient and celebrated city of Syria, situate on both sides of the Orontes, about twelve miles from the shores of the Mediterranean; others of Epiphania, or the Lesser Hamath.

But, besides the sons of Canaan and their descendants, who were settled within the limits of the promised land, or in its immediate vicinity, several tribes and nations of different origin, fixed their abodes in the circumjacent countries, of which it is necessary to take some notice.

The sacred historian mentions a people under the name of Avims, whose settlements extended from Hazerim unto Azzah*. Azzah, in the opinion of all interpreters, is the same city that was afterwards known by the name of Gaza; and Hazerim is probably the same place that Moses, in the book of Numbers, calls Hazaroth, in whose neighbourhood the children of Israel had one of their stations, as they travelled through the deserts of Arabia.

These people were probably descendants of Cush; and in process of time were dispossessed of this tract of country by the Philistines, descendants of Mizraim, who seized upon the country of the Avims, and the adjacent parts of Canaan lying on the Mediterranean. The possessions of the Philistines were divided into five lordships, denominated from their chief towns, Gaza, Ashdod, Eshkalon, Gath, and Ekron.

Gaza lay in the southern extremity of that narrow slip of country which submitted to the arms of the Philistines; and the city of Gaza, from which the lordship took its name,

* Deut. ii. 23.

stood in the south-west angle of the land of Canaan. This was the city whose gates Sampson carried away to the top of the hill, and where he was kept in prison by his cruel and ungenerous enemies. It was famous for the temple of Dagon, which the renowned Israelite pulled down upon himself and his unfeeling tormentors, in revenge for the loss of his sight and his liberty. This place was afterwards chosen by the Persians to be the treasury where they deposited the tribute of the western provinces of their immense empire; whence all riches received, at length, among the people of those countries, the name of Gaza. It was destroyed by Alexander the Great, as the prophet had foretold, and consigned to perpetual desolation. The city built by Constantine, and called by the name of Gaza, is nearer to the sea than the ancient city, and by consequence does not affect the truth of the prediction.

Next to Gaza, northward, rose the city of Askelon, styled by the Greeks and Latins Ascalon, and situate also on the sea shore. It is said to have been famous among the idolatrous nations of antiquity, for a temple dedicated to Decreto, the mother of Semiramis, who was adored here under the form of a mermaid; and for a temple of Apollo, in which Herod, the father of Antipater, and grandfather of Herod the Great, officiated as priest.

Above Ascalon, still farther to the north, stood the city of Ashdod, called by the Greeks Azotus, and mentioned under that name in the Acts of the Apostles. It lies near the shore, between Gaza and Joppa, and was distinguished by the temple of Dagon. Into this temple the captive ark of Jehovah was brought by the triumphant idolators, and set by the side of their unsightly idol. But their joy was of short duration; the object of their stupid veneration was laid prostrate before the symbol of the divine presence, and broken in pieces, and a severe, but righteous vengeance, inflicted on themselves for their presumption. The passage is too important to be omitted: "And when they of Ashdod rose early on the morrow,

behold Dagon was fallen upon his face to the earth, before the ark of the Lord: and they took Dagon and set him in his place again. And when they arose early on the morrow morning, behold Dagon was fallen on his face to the ground, before the ark of the Lord; and the head of Dagon, and both the palms of his hands, were cut off upon the threshold, only the stump of Dagon was left to him." Nor was this all: "The hand of the Lord was heavy also upon the men of Ashdod; and he destroyed and smote them with emrods, even Ashdod and the coasts thereof. And when the men of Asdod saw that it was so, they said, The ark of the God of Israel shall not abide with us; for his hand is sore upon us and upon Dagon our god. They sent therefore and gathered all the lords of the Philistines unto them, and said, What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel? And they answered, Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried about unto Gath. And they carried the ark of the God of Israel thither*."

Gath, lying still farther to the north than Ashdod, was memorable in the history of the Old Testament for being the birth place of the giant Goliath, who defied the armies of the living God, and suffered the punishment due to his impiety, from the hand of David. The city was dismantled by this prince; but was afterwards rebuilt by Rehoboam his grandson; and after being again dismantled by Ozias king of Judah, was totally destroyed by Hazael king of Syria. But from this catastrophe it gradually recovered, and retained its ancient name in the days of Eusebius and Jerome, who place it about four miles from Eleutheropolis, towards Diospolis or Lydda.

Gath suffered severely while the ark of the covenant was detained within its walls: "The hand of the Lord," says the sacred writer, "was against the city with a very great destruction; and he smote the men of the city both small and great; and they had emrods in their secret parts. Therefore they sent the ark of God to Ekron†." This city was placed in the

* 1 Sam. v. 2—8.

† 1 Sam. v. 9, 10.

northern extremity of the country which submitted to the yoke of the Philistines. It was called by the Greeks Accaron; was a place of great wealth and power, and held out a long time against the arms of Israel. Ekron is frequently mentioned in the holy Scriptures, and particularly for the idolatrous worship of Beelzebub, that is, the Lord of flies; a name given him by the Jews, either in contempt of his divinity and the rites of his worship, or in allusion to the numerous swarms of flies which attended his sacrifices. But whatever might be the reason for distinguishing him by this name, certain it is, that in this city was the principal seat of his worship: here he was held in the highest honour, and is therefore called in Scripture "the god of Ekron."

The inhabitants of Ekron, less hardened in crime, or less insensible to danger than their neighbours, were the first that advised the Philistines to restore the ark of Jehovah the God of Israel: "The Ekronites cried out, saying, they have brought about the ark of the God of Israel to us, to slay us and our people. So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go to its own place;" and the destructive calamity which hung over their devoted city was averted*.

On the south of Canaan, the Horites inhabited mount Seir, and the country as far as the wilderness of Paran. Toward the east and south-east, dwelt a gigantic race of men called the Emims; and due east, another gigantic people under the name of Zuzims or Zamzummims. On the north-east were settled the Rephaims, a branch of the same gigantic family. These several tribes, or nations, inhabited the regions adjoining to Canaan, when Abraham arrived in the promised land, except the country toward the north, which was possessed by some of the families of Canaan; but their descent is no longer to be traced in the records of time.

When the sacred writer says that Chedorlaomer king of

* Well's Geog. vol. 2. p. 5, 6.

Elam, and his confederates, smote the Rephaims, Zuzims, Emims, and Horites, and also the country of the Amalekites, the last clause must be understood proleptically, that they smote the country which was afterwards occupied by the Amalekites: for the Amalekites were probably descended from Amalek, a grandson of Esau, and by consequence no such people existed in the days of Chedorlaomer*.

In the opinion of Dr Shaw, the land of promise was not only to extend along the lower part of the Nile, known to us by the name of the Pelusiac branch, but even a great way higher up to the south-west, as far as the parallel of the ancient Memphis and of the Red sea; and the reason he assigns is, that the land of Goshen was allotted to the people of Israel; for Goshen lay contiguous to this part of the Nile, and was watered by it. In proof of which, Joshua is said (ch. x. 41.) "to smite the countries and people, from Kadesh-barnea even unto Gaza, and all the country of Goshen;" that is, all the countries and people that lay to the northward as far as the Great sea, and to the westward as far as the Nile. And again (chap. xi. 16.) "So Joshua took all that land, the hills and all the south coast, and all the land of Goshen." The very situation, therefore, and extent of the lot of the tribe of Judah, very naturally, continues our author, points out to us the river of Egypt, *i. e.* the Nile, to have been their western boundary.

But to the singular opinion of this learned writer, the most decisive arguments may be opposed. The nation of Israel dwelt in Goshen when they were in the land of Egypt, and in the house of bondage: therefore Goshen was a part of Egypt which was not comprehended in the promised inheritance of the chosen seed. The sacred writers constantly speak of their people going up out of the land of Egypt to the land which Jehovah had promised to the patriarchs; but if they had obtained the grant of Goshen in Egypt, how could it be said they went up out of Egypt to the land which had been promised to their

* Well's Geog. vol. 1. p. 142. Bocharti Phaleg.

fathers? They were, according to Dr Shaw's hypothesis, already in possession of the promised land; and all they had to do, was to vindicate their claim against their oppressors. In fine, when the people of Israel were advanced a considerable way into the wilderness, they repented of their undertaking, and spake of appointing a captain to lead them back into Egypt, or the land of Goshen, from whence they had emigrated: Goshen on the Nile, therefore, could not belong to the promised land.

Let us now attend to the proofs which that celebrated traveller brings in support of his opinion, from the book of Joshua. 1. It is said Joshua smote all the countries and people from Kadesh-barnea, even unto Gaza; and all the country of Goshen. It is readily granted, that the country of Goshen mentioned by Joshua, must have been in the very neighbourhood of Gaza; but Gaza, though a frontier city, was distant many days' journey across the burning desert, from Goshen in Egypt. Nor is it probable, that this country which had been completely drained of its inhabitants by the departure of Israel, and deprived of its most powerful support by the destruction of Pharaoh and his numerous hosts in the Red sea, was able to offer any resistance to the victorious arms of Joshua. To subdue the land of Goshen, the armies of Israel must have gone back again into Egypt; of which expedition the Scriptures are entirely silent: and therefore it may be concluded with perfect certainty, that such an event never took place.

2. From the eleventh chapter we learn, that Joshua took all the land of the hills, and all the south coast, and all the land of Goshen. But this place could not be Goshen in Egypt; for no history sacred or profane, mentions the supposed occupation of that country by the people of Israel, after their departure from it under the conduct of Moses. In the seventeenth verse, Joshua says, that the whole country which he conquered lay from "mount Halak, that goeth up to Seir, even unto Baalgad in the valley of Lebanon, under mount Hermon." In this tract, then, lay the Goshen that he conquered; and the only point to be settled is, what was the situation of the mount

Halak, which terminated the southern boundary toward Egypt. This is rendered easy by a short notice concerning Goshen in the tenth chapter, which is couched in these words: "Joshua smote them from Kadesh-barnea even unto Gaza; and all the country of Goshen, *even unto Gibeon**. Goshen therefore extended to Gibeon; but this was a city of Canaan, whose inhabitants artfully prevailed on Joshua and the elders of the congregation to enter into a treaty of peace; and which lay so near Gilgal, where Joshua had pitched his camp, that the army of Israel came to its assistance against the confederate kings, after no more than one night's march; which, on the hypothesis of Dr Shaw, was quite impossible. The situation of mount Halak affords another proof that the Goshen subdued by Joshua is not to be sought for in the kingdom of Egypt. That mountain did not lie on the road to Egypt, but on the road from Canaan to Seir, the country of Esau. Now Seir lay on the south of Canaan, between the lake Asphaltites and the Red sea; while the Egyptian Goshen lay to the south-west, in the east side of Egypt, upon the eastern channel of the Nile, afterwards called Trajan's river. Hence it is evident, that Joshua spake of Goshen in the land of Canaan, in the immediate neighbourhood of Gibeon, on the south side of the inheritance of Judah.

Goshen in the Sanscreeet language, signifies a shepherd; and Goshana, the land of shepherds. It seems to have had the same meaning in Egypt, and in the Lesser Asia, and to have been given as an appropriate name to regions distinguished by the richness and extent of their pastures. We know from the sacred writings, that the country of Goshen in Egypt was admirably fitted for the rearing of cattle; and on this very account selected for the residence of Jacob and his family, who, following the example of their fathers, had from their earliest days devoted themselves to the pastoral life. For the same reason, the land of Goshen in Canaan probably received its name; it was a land more adapted than the surrounding districts, by its rich and abundant pastures, to the trade of a shepherd.

The land of Canaan was reserved by the wisdom and goodness of heaven, for the possession of his peculiar people, and the display of the most stupendous wonders. The theatre was small, but admirably situate for the convenient observation of the human race,—at the junction of the two great continents of Asia and Africa, and almost within sight of Europe. From this highly favoured spot, as from a common centre, the report of God's wonderful works, the glad tidings of salvation through the obedience and sufferings of his own eternal Son, might be rapidly and easily wafted to every part of the globe, and circulated through every nation. When the Most High therefore fixed the boundaries of the postdiluvian kingdoms, he reserved the inheritance of Canaan for the future seat of his glory; and while powerful states and extended empires rose and flourished in the circumjacent regions, his secret providence parcelled out the land of Promise among a number of petty kings, whose individual weakness and jarring interests gave them an easy prey to the armies of Israel. To this arrangement the inspired prophet certainly refers in these words, “Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations; ask thy father and he will shew thee, thy elders and they will tell thee. When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people, according to the number of the children of Israel *.” Canaan and his posterity were directed to take possession of Palestine, rather than any other branch of Noah's descendants, because he had already fallen under the solemn malediction of his grandfather Noah, for his unnatural conduct; and they were permitted to fill up the measure of their iniquity by a general corruption of manners, and particularly, by departing from the knowledge and worship of the true God, to the service of idols; and therefore might be justly driven out, when the time fixed in the divine purpose arrived, to make room for the chosen people of Jehovah. Their bounds, says the inspired writer, he set

* Deut. xxxii. 8.

according to the number of the children of Israel; for Canaan and his eleven sons exactly corresponded with the twelve tribes, into which the family of Jacob was divided.

CHAP. VII.

OF THE MOUNTAINS OF CANAAN.

PALESTINE is in general, a mountainous country; even the whole of Syria, of which the Holy Land is reckoned a part, is in some degree a chain of mountains, branching off in various directions, from one great and leading ridge. Whether the traveller approach it from the sea, or from the immense plains of the desert, he beholds at a great distance, a lofty and clouded chain running north and south as far as the eye can reach; and as he advances, sees the tops of the mountains sometimes detached, and sometimes united in ridges, uniformly terminate in one great line, towering above them all. This line, which extends without interruption from its entry by the north quite into Arabia, runs at first close to the sea, between Alexandretta and the Orontes; and after opening a passage to that river, proceeds to the southward, quitting for a short distance the shore, and in a chain of summits stretches as far as the sources of the Jordan; where it divides into two branches, to enclose as it were in a capacious bason, this river and its three lakes. During its course, a countless number of branches separate from the main trunk, some of which are lost in the desert, where they form various enclosed hollows, as those of Damascus and Haran; while others advance towards the sea, where they sometimes end in steep declivities as at Carmel, or Nekoura, or by a gentle descent sink into the plains of Anti-och and Tripoli, of Tyre and Acre.

Such is the general appearance of the country which Moses

taught his people to expect, while they traversed the burning and dreary wilderness: "For the land whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot as a garden of herbs; but the land whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven*." The striking contrast, in this short but glowing description, between the land of Egypt, where the people of Israel had so long and cruelly suffered, and the inheritance promised to their fathers, where Jehovah reserved for them and their children every blessing that a nation can desire, must have made a deep impression upon their minds. In Egypt, the eye is fatigued with wandering over an immense flat plain, intersected with stagnant canals, and studded with mud-walled towns and cottages; seldom refreshed with a single shower; exhibiting, for three months, the singular spectacle of an extensive sheet of water, from which the towns and villages that are built upon the higher grounds, are seen like islands in the midst of the ocean—marshy and rank with vegetation for three others—and parched and dusty the remainder of the year. They had seen a population of naked and sun-burnt peasants, tending their buffaloes, or driving their camels, or sheltering themselves from the overwhelming heat beneath the shade of the thinly scattered date or sycamore trees; below, natural or artificial lakes, cultivated fields, and vacant grounds of considerable extent—overhead, a burning sun, darting his oppressive rays from an azure sky, almost invariably free from clouds. In that "weary land," they were compelled to water their corn fields with the foot; a painful and laborious employment, rendered necessary by the want of rain. Those vegetable productions which require a greater quantity of moisture than is furnished by the periodical inundations of the Nile, they were obliged to refresh with water drawn out of the river by machinery, and lodged afterwards in capacious

* Deut. xi. 11.

cisterns. When the melons, sugar-canes, and other vegetables that are commonly disposed in rills, required to be refreshed, they struck out the plugs which are fixed in the bottom of the cisterns; and then the water gushing out, is conducted from one rill to another by the husbandman, who is always ready, as occasion requires, to stop and divert the torrent, by turning the earth against it with his foot, opening at the same time with his mattock a new trench to receive it*. Such is the practice to which Moses alludes; and it continues to be observed without variation to this day. But from this fatiguing uniformity of surface, and toilsome method of watering their grounds, the people of Israel were now to be relieved; they were going to possess a land of hills and valleys, clothed with woods—beautified and enriched with fountains of water—divided by rivers, streams, and brooks, flowing cool and pure from the summits of their mountains—and, with little attention from the cultivator, exciting the secret powers of vegetation, and scattering plenty wherever they came.

Sometimes the drought of summer renders frequent waterings necessary even in Judea. On such occasions, the water is drawn up from the wells by oxen, and carried by the inhabitants in earthen jars, to refrigerate their plantations on the sides of the hills†. The necessity to which the Jewish husbandman is occasionally reduced, to water his grounds in this manner, is not inconsistent with the words of Moses which distinguish the Holy Land from Egypt, by its drinking rain from heaven, while the latter is watered by the foot. The inspired prophet alludes, in that passage, not to gardens of herbs, or other cultivated spots on the steep declivities of the hills and mountains, where, in so warm a climate as that of Canaan, the deficiency of rain must be supplied by art, but to their corn fields; which, in Egypt, are watered by artificial canals, in the manner just described; in Canaan, by the rain of heaven.

* Shaw's Trav.

† Pococke's Trav.

The lands of Egypt, it must be granted, are supplied with water by the overflowing of the Nile, and are so saturated with moisture, that they require no more watering for the producing of corn, and several other vegetables; while the gardens require fresh supplies every three or four days*. But then it is to be remembered, that immense labour was requisite to conduct the waters of the river to many of their lands; and those works of the ancient kings of Egypt, by which they distributed the streams of the Nile through their whole country, are celebrated by Maillet, as the most magnificent and the most admirable of all their undertakings; and those labours which they caused their subjects undergo, doubtless were designed to prevent much heavier, to which they must otherwise have submitted. The words of Moses addressed to the people of Israel, probably contained a significance and force of which we can form but a very imperfect idea, and which has not of late been at all understood. Maillet was assured, that the large canal which filled the cisterns of Alexandria, and is at least fifteen leagues long, was entirely paved, and its sides were lined with brick, which were as perfect as in the days of the Romans. If bricks were used in the construction of their more ancient canals, a supposition extremely probable; and if those made by the people of Israel were designed for purposes of this kind,—they must have heard with a peculiar satisfaction, that the country to which they were going, required no canals to be dug, no bricks to be prepared for paving and lining them, in order to water it; labours which had so greatly embittered their lives in Egypt. This idea is favoured by the account which Moses gives of their former servitude: hard bondage, in mortar and brick, is joined with other services of the field†, among which may be numbered the digging and cleansing of their canals; and in this view, the mortar and brick are very naturally joined with those laborious and standing operations.

* Maillet.

† Exod. i. 14.

The surface of Canaan is as diversified as the face of Egypt is uniform. Skirted with plains of moderate extent, and separated by narrow vales, the mountains continually change their forms and appearance with their levels and situation. The forests with which some of them are crowned; the woods which adorn the plains and the sides of the hills, where the fir, the larch, and the oak, the box, the laurel, the myrtle, and the yew, mingle their various foliage; the streams of cool and limpid water that precipitate themselves from the rocks, to refresh the parched fields in their way to the sea,—produce an air of liveliness which delights the traveller, wearied and disgusted with the melancholy nakedness of Egypt. On some declivities, he meets with cottages, even in its present state of desolation, surrounded with fig trees and vineyards; and the sight, observes a modern writer, repays the fatigue of a road, which, by rugged paths, conducts him from the bottom of the valleys to the summits of the mountains. The inferior branches which extend to the northward of Aleppo, present, on the contrary, nothing but naked rocks, without verdure and without soil. Southward of Antioch, and on the sea coast, the sides of the hills are adapted to the cultivation of the vine and the olive. Mount Casius, however, which rises above Antioch to an immense height, must be excepted. On the side of the desert, the summits and declivities of this chain exhibit almost one series of white rocks, where the aching eye of the wanderer can scarcely discover a single spot of verdure, on which it may repose. Towards Lebanon, the mountains are high, but covered in many places with as much earth as fits them for cultivation. Among the crags of the rocks, the beautiful and far-famed cedar waves its lofty top, and extends its powerful arms, surrounded by the fir and the oak, the fig and the vine. On the road to Jerusalem, the mountains are not so lofty nor so rugged, but become fitter for tillage. They rise again to the south-east of mount Carmel; are covered with woods, and afford very picturesque views: but advancing toward Judea,

they lose their verdure,—the valleys become narrow, dry, and stony, and terminate at the Dead sea in a pile of desolate rocks, precipices, and caverns. These vast excavations, some of which will contain fifteen hundred men, are the grottoes of Engeddi, which have been a refuge to the oppressed or the discontented in all ages. Westward of Jordan and the lake Asphaltites, another chain of rocks, still loftier and more rugged, presents a yet more gloomy aspect, and announces the distant entrance of the desert, and the termination of the habitable regions.

The most remarkable mountains in Palestine, are those of Lebanon, so frequently celebrated in the holy Scriptures. This lofty range, described by ancient and modern historians under the names of Libanus and Antilibanus, is the highest point of all Syria, and serves equally as a boundary to Judea and Assyria; but, so frequent mention is made of them in the writings of the prophets, that they are generally included within the confines of the land of Promise. They reach their highest elevation to the south-east of Tripoli; and their towering summits capped with clouds, are discerned at the distance of thirty leagues. The superior height of Lebanon, is ascertained by the course of the rivers. The Orontes, flowing from the mountains of Damascus, loses itself below Antioch; the Kasmia which, north of Balbec, shapes its course towards Tyre; the Jordan, forced by the declivities toward the south,—prove this to be the highest point. Next to Lebanon, the highest part of the country is mount Akkar, which becomes visible as soon as the traveller leaves Marra in the desert. It appears like an immense flattened cone, and is constantly seen for two days' journey. The height of these mountains has not been ascertained by the barometer; but we may deduce it from a circumstance mentioned by every traveller who visits the land of Promise. • In winter, their tops are entirely covered with snow, from Alexandretta to Jerusalem, but after March, it melts, except on mount Lebanon; where, however,

according to Volney, it does not continue the whole year, unless in the highest cavities, and towards the north-east, where it is sheltered from the sea breezes, and the rays of the sun. In this situation, that traveller saw it at the very time he complains of being nearly suffocated with heat in the valley of Balbec. Now, since it is fully ascertained, that snow in this latitude, requires an elevation of fifteen or sixteen hundred fathoms, we may conclude that to be the height of Lebanon. It is therefore much lower than the Alps, or even than the Pyrenees: Mount Blanc, the loftiest of the Alps, is estimated at two thousand four hundred fathoms above the level of the sea; and the peak of Ossian in the Pyrenees, at nineteen hundred.

Lebanon, which gives its name to the extensive range of the Kesrauan, and the country of the Drusez, presents to the traveller every where majestic mountains. At every step, he meets with scenes in which Nature displays beauty or grandeur, sometimes romantic wildness, but always variety. The sublime elevation and steep ascent of this magnificent rampart, which seems to enclose the country; the gigantic masses which shoot into the clouds,—inspire him with astonishment and reverence. Should he scale these summits which bounded his view, and ascend the highest point of Lebanon distinguished by the name of the Sannin, the immensity of space which expands around him, becomes a fresh subject of admiration. On every side, he beholds a horizon without bounds; whilst, in clear weather, the sight is lost over the desert, which extends to the Persian gulf, and over the sea, which washes the coasts of Europe. He seems to command the whole world; while the wandering eye, now surveying the successive chains of mountains, transports the mind in one instant, from Antioch to Jerusalem; and now, approaching the surrounding objects, observes the distant profundity of the coast, till the attention at last fixed by distincter objects, more minutely examines the rocks, the woods, the torrents, the sloping sides of the hills,

the villages and the towns; and the mind secretly exults at the diminution of objects, which formerly appeared so great. He sees the valleys obscured by stormy clouds, with fresh delight, and smiles at hearing the thunder, which so often burst over his head, growling beneath his feet; while the threatening summits of the mountains are diminished, till they appear like the furrows of a ploughed field, or the steps of an amphitheatre, and he feels himself gratified by an elevation above so many lofty objects, on which he now looks down with inward satisfaction*.

On visiting the interior parts of these mountains, the roughness of the roads, the steep descents and precipices, strike him at first with terror; but the sagacity of the mule which he rides, the only beast of burden which can traverse them with safety, soon relieves him, and he calmly surveys those picturesque scenes that entertain him in quick succession. There he travels whole days together, to reach a place which was in sight at his departure; he winds, descends, skirts the hills, and climbs their precipitous sides; and in this perpetual change, it seems as if magic herself varied for him at every step, the decorations of the scenery. Sometimes he sees villages gliding from the steep declivities on which they are built, and so arranged, that the terraces of one row of houses, serve as a street to those above them. Sometimes he sees the habitation of a recluse, standing on a solitary height; here a rock, perforated by a torrent, and become a natural arch; there another rock, worn perpendicular, resembles a high wall. On the sides of the hills, he frequently sees beds of stones uncovered and detached by the waters, rising up like artificial ruins. In many places,* the waters meeting with inclined beds, have excavated the intermediate earth, and formed caverns; in others, subterraneous channels are formed, through which flow rivulets for a part of the year. These subterraneous rivulets are common throughout Syria; they are found near Damascus, at the

* Volney's Trav. vol. 1. p. 203.

sources of the Orontes, and at those of the Jordan. That of Mar-Hanna, near the village of Shouair, opens by a gulf called El-baloisa, or the Swallower. It is an aperture of about ten feet wide, in the middle of a hollow; at the depth of fifteen feet, is a sort of first bottom, but it only hides a very profound lateral opening. Some years before Volney visited Lebanon, it was shut, as it had served to conceal a murder. The winter rains coming on, the waters collected and formed a pretty deep lake; but some small streams penetrating among the stones, they were soon stripped of the earth which fastened them, and the pressure of the mass of water prevailing, the whole obstacle was removed with an explosion like thunder; and the re-action of the compressed air was so violent, that a column of water spouted up, and fell upon a house at the distance of at least two hundred paces. The current this occasioned, formed a whirlpool, which swallowed up the trees and vines planted in the hollow, and threw them out by the second aperture.

These picturesque situations often become tragical. By thaws and earthquakes, rocks have been known to lose their equilibrium, roll down on the neighbouring houses, and bury the inhabitants. This happened about twenty years before Volney's visit, when a fragment of the mountain, slipping from its base, overwhelmed a whole village, without leaving a single trace where it formerly stood. Still more lately, and near the same place, says that traveller, the entire side of a hill covered with mulberries and vines, was detached by a sudden thaw, and sliding down the rock, was launched like a ship from the stocks, into the valley below. It might be supposed, that such accidents would disgust the inhabitants of those mountains; but, besides that they happen seldom, they are compensated by an advantage, which makes them prefer their perilous habitations, to the most stable and fertile plains,—the security they enjoy from the oppressions of the Turks. This security is esteemed so great a blessing by the inhabitants, that

they have discovered an industry on these rocks, which we may elsewhere expect in vain. By mere art and labour, they have fertilized a rocky soil. Sometimes to gain the water, they conduct it by a thousand windings along the declivities, or stop it by dams in the valleys; while in other places, they support the ground, ready to crumble down, by walls and terraces. Almost all these mountains cultivated in this manner, have the appearance of a flight of stairs, or an amphitheatre, every step of which is a row of vines or mulberry trees. Our author computed from an hundred to an hundred and twenty of these gradations on the same declivity. In many places, their summits are flattened and stretched into vast plains; which reward the toil of the cultivator with luxuriant crops of corn and all kinds of pulse. Numerous rivulets of excellent water intersect these elevated regions, and diffuse on every side the richest verdure. The soil which covers the declivities, and the narrow valleys which separate them, is extremely fertile, and produces in abundance, corn, wine, and oil, which D'Arvieux pronounces the best in Syria.

These mountains consist of a hard, calcareous, whitish stone, sonorous like free-stone, and disposed in strata variously inclined. This stone has nearly the same appearance in every part of Syria: sometimes it is quite bare and peeled; such, for instance, is that of the hills on the north side of the road from Antioch to Aleppo, and that which serves as a bed to the upper part of the rivulet, which passes by the latter city. In travelling from Aleppo to Hama, veins of the same rock are constantly to be met with in the plain; while the mountains on the right, present huge piles, which appear like the ruins of towns and castles. The same stone, under a more regular form, likewise composes the greater part of Lebanon, Anti-Lebanon, the mountains of the Druzes, Galilee, and mount Carmel, and stretches to the south of the lake Asphaltites. The inhabitants every where build their houses, and make lime with it. Of this beautiful stone was the temple of Jchovah built.

and the other splendid edifices with which Solomon adorned the capital of his kingdom. He “had threescore and ten thousand that bare burdens, and fourscore hewers in the mountains; --- And the king commanded, and they brought great stones, costly stones, and hewed stones, to lay the foundations of the house. And Solomon’s builders and Hiram’s builders did hew them, and the stone-squarers*.”

Volney never heard, that these stones contained any petrified shells in the upper regions of Lebanon: but he found between Batround and Djebail, in the Kesraouan, not far from the sea, a quarry of Schistus stones, the flakes of which bear the impressions of plants, fish, shells, and particularly the sea onion. The bed of the torrent of Azkalon in Palestine, is also lined with a heavy stone, porous and salt, which contains many small volutes and bivalves of the Mediterranean. Pococke found a large quantity of them in the rocks which border on the Dead sea. These are indubitable remains of the antediluvian world, and afford an additional proof, if any were needed, of the existence and prevalence of the deluge over the surface of our globe.

Iron is the only mineral which abounds in these mountains, and is found in those of Kesraouan, and of the Druzes in great abundance. Every summer the inhabitants work those mines, which are simply ochreous. Report says, there was anciently a copper mine near Aleppo, which Volney thinks must have been long since abandoned: he was also informed by the Druzes, that in the declivity of the hill formerly mentioned, a mineral was discovered which produced both lead and silver; but as such a discovery would have proved the ruin of the whole district, by attracting the attention of the Turks, they quickly destroyed every vestige of it†. These statements establish the accuracy of Moses, in the account which he gave his nation of the promised inheritance: “A land whose stones are iron, and out of whose mountains thou mayst dig brass‡.”

* 1 Kings v. 15, 17, 18.

† Volney’s Trav. vol. 1. p. 211.

‡ Duet. viii. 9.

A different temperature prevails in different parts of these mountains; hence, the expression of the Arabian poets, That Lebanon bears winter on his head, spring upon his shoulders, and autumn in his bosom, while summer lies sleeping at his feet.

In the year 1574, Dr Rauwolf visited Lebanon; he proceeded from Tripoli with the patriarch of the Maronites, and walked through plantations of olive trees, which extend all the way to the foot of the mountain, through pleasant vineyards, and fields sown with barley and millet. As they passed through the woods, they were entertained with the songs of a variety of birds, and saw the hart bounding among the trees. Near the mountain were several villages, where they were regaled with wine, the produce of the mountain; it was white, and our author declares, better than any he had ever tasted. The sides of the mountain were moistened with numerous rills; and the heights were crowned with trees of various kinds, among which he noticed the vine, two species of dwarf cedar, mingled with the styrax tree, which produces a fragrant gum, and sheds around it a refreshing odour. They ascended the mountain by a winding path cut into steps. From the top of the monastery, where the patriarch who accompanied him resided, he saw towards the east, the snowy peak of the Sannin towering above the cedars. Of these celebrated trees he found only twenty-four nearly in a circle, and two decayed with age. They are evergreens, have long stems, several fathoms in girth, and are, says Rauwolf, as high as our fir trees; they have very large arms, which bend the trunk, and injure the beauty of the tree; their branches shoot up straight, on which the cones, which are large and round, are placed perpendicularly, disposed in rows at equal distances, with great regularity. These circumstances distinguish the appearance of the tree from that of all other firs, else it would very much resemble the larch, especially in the leaf. The mountain, says Rauwolf, is very high, and may be seen at the distance of two hundred Italian miles.

Rather more than a century afterwards, Mr Maundrell visited the mountains of Lebanon. Having proceeded about half an hour through the olive yards of Sidon, he and his party came to the foot of mount Libanus. They had an easy ascent for two hours, after which it grew more steep and difficult; in about an hour and a half more, they came to a fountain of water, where they encamped for the night. Next day after ascending for three hours, they reached the highest ridge of the mountain, where the snow lay by the side of the road. They began immediately to descend on the other side, and in two hours came to a small village, where a fine brook, gushing at once from the side of the mountain, rushes down into the valley below, and after flowing about two leagues, loses itself in the river Letane. The valley is called Bocat, and seems to be the same with the Bicath-Aven of the prophet *; “I will break also the bar of Damascus, and cut off the inhabitant from the plain (rather the vale) of Aven, and him that holdeth the sceptre from the house of Eden.” The neighbourhood of Damascus, and particularly a place near it, which, in the time of Maundrell, still bore the name of Eden, render his conjecture extremely probable. It might also have the name of Aven, which signifies vanity, from the idolatrous worship of Baal practised at Balbec or Heliopolis, which is situate in this valley.

The beauties of Lebanon seem to have left a deeper impression in the mind of D’Arvieux. After travelling six hours in pleasant valleys, says that writer, and over mountains covered with different species of trees, we entered a small plain, on a fertile hill wholly covered with walnut trees and olives, in the middle of which is the village of Eden.—In spite of my weariness, I could not but incessantly admire this beautiful country. It is truly an epitome of the terrestrial paradise, of which it bears the name. Eden is rather a hamlet than a village.

* Amos i. 5.

The houses are scattered, and separated from each other by gardens, which are enclosed by walls made of stones piled up without mortar.

We quitted Eden about eight o'clock in the morning, and advanced to mountains so extremely high, that we seemed to be travelling in the middle regions of the atmosphere. Here the sky was clear and serene above us, while we saw below us, thick clouds dissolving in rain and watering the plains.

After three hours of laborious travelling, we arrived at the famous cedars about eleven o'clock. We counted twenty-three of them. The circumference of these trees is thirty-six feet.

The bark of the cedar resembles that of the pine. The leaves and cone also bear considerable resemblance. The stem is upright, the wood is hard, and has the reputation of being incorruptible. The leaves are long, narrow, rough, very green, ranged in tufts along the branches; they shoot in spring, and fall in the beginning of winter. Its flowers and fruit resemble those of the pine. From the full grown trees, a fluid trickles naturally, and without incision; this is clear, transparent whitish, and after a time dries and hardens: it is supposed to possess great virtues.—The place where these great trees are stationed, is a plain of nearly a league in circumference; on the summit of a mount which is environed almost on all sides by other mounts, so high that their summits are always covered with snow. This plain is level, the air is pure, the heavens always serene. On one side of this plain is a frightful precipice, from whence flows a copious stream, which, descending into the valley, forms a considerable part of the Holy river, or *Nahar Kadisha*. The view along this valley is interesting; and the crevices of the rocks are filled with earth of so excellent a quality, that trees grow in them; and being continually refreshed with the vapours rising from the streams below, attain to considerable dimensions. Nor is the sense of smelling less gratified than that of sight, by the fragrance diffused from the odoriferous plants around.

He afterwards says, "the banks of the river appeared enchanted. This stream is principally formed by the source which issues below the cedars, but is continually augmented by a prodigious number of rills and fountains, which fall from the mountain, gliding along the clefts of the rocks, and forming many charming natural cascades, which communicate cooling breezes, and banish the idea of being in a country subject to extreme heat. If to these enjoyments we add that of the nightingale's song, it must be granted that these places are infinitely agreeable."

The cedars which he visited, encircle the region of perpetual snow. Lebanon is in this part free from rocks, and only rises and falls with small easy unevennesses, but is perfectly barren and desolate. The ground, where not concealed by the snow, for several hours riding appeared to be covered with a sort of white slates, thin and smooth. Yet these dreary summits are not without their use; they serve as a conservatory for abundance of snow, which, thawing in the heat of summer, furnishes ample supplies of water to the rivers and fountains in the valleys below. In the snow, he saw the prints of the feet of several wild beasts, which are the sole proprietors of these upper parts of the mountain. Maundrell found only sixteen cedars of large growth, and a natural plantation of smaller ones, which were very numerous. One of the largest was twelve yards six inches in girth, and thirty-seven yards in the spread of its boughs. At six yards from the ground, it was divided into five limbs, each equal to a great tree*.

This statement sheds a clear and steady light on those passages of Scripture which refer to Lebanon; and enables us to reconcile with ease several apparent contradictions. So famous was this stupendous mountain in the days of Moses, that to be permitted to see it, was the object of his earnest desires and repeated prayers; and as the strongest expression of his admiration, he connects it in his addresses to the throne of his God,

* Maundrell's Trav.

with Zion the future seat of the divine glory. "I pray thee, let me go over and see the good land that is beyond Jordan; that goodly mountain and Lebanon."

The storms and tempests which, gathering on the highest peak of Lebanon, burst on the plains and valleys below, are often very severe. When De la Valle was travelling in the neighbourhood of that mountain, in the end of April, a wind blew from its summit so vehement and so cold, with so great a profusion of snow, that though he and his company were in a manner buried in their quilted coverlets, yet it was sensibly felt, and proved very disagreeable. It is not therefore without reason that Lebanon, or the white mountain as the term signifies, is the name by which that lofty chain is distinguished; and that the sacred writers so frequently refer to the snow and the gelid waters of Lebanon. They sometimes allude to it as a wild and desolate region; and certainly no part of the earth is more dreary and barren than the Sannin, the region of perpetual snow. On that naked summit, the seat of storm and tempest, where the principles of vegetation are extinguished, the art and industry of man can make no impression; nothing but the creating power of God himself, can produce a favourable alteration. Thus, predicting a wonderful change, such as results from the signal manifestations of the divine favour to individuals or the church, the prophet demands, "Is it not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field*?" The contrast in this promise, between the naked, snowy, and tempestuous summits of Lebanon, and a field beautified and enriched with the fairest and most useful productions of nature, expresses with great force, the difference which the smiles of Heaven produce in the most wretched and hopeless circumstances of an individual or a nation.

Lebanon was justly considered as a very strong barrier to the land of Promise; and opposing an almost insurmountable obstacle to the movements of cavalry and chariots of war.

* Isa. xxix. 17.

When Sennacherib, therefore, in the arrogance of his heart, and the pride of his strength, wished to express the ease with which he had subdued the greatest difficulties, and how vain was the resistance of Hezekiah and his people, he says, "By the multitude of my chariots am I come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon; and I will cut down the tall cedars thereof, and the choice fir trees thereof; and I will enter into the height of his border, and the forest of his Carmel *." What others accomplish on foot, with much labour and the greatest difficulty, by a winding path cut into steps, which no beast of burden, except the cautious and sure-footed mule, can tread, that haughty monarch vaunted he could perform with horses and a multitude of chariots. Surrounded by crouching slaves, and accustomed to see every obstacle vanish before him, he vainly supposed he could gratify the most inordinate desire; and what the world accounted physical impossibilities, must yield to his power.

The lofty summits of Lebanon were the chosen haunts of various beasts of prey; the prints of whose feet, Maundrell and his party observed in the snow. To these savage tenants of the desert, the prophet Habakkuk seems to allude in that prediction: "For the violence of Lebanon shall cover thee, and the spoil of beasts which made them afraid, because of men's blood, and for the violence of the land †." The violence of Lebanon is a beautiful and energetic expression, denoting the ferocious animals that roam on its mountains, and lodge in its thickets; and that, occasionally descending into the plain in quest of prey, ravage the fold or seize upon the unwary villager. To such dangers Solomon expressly refers, in the animated invitation which, in the name of the Redeemer, he addresses to the church: "Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon; look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenar and Hermon, from the lion's dens, and from the mountains of the leopards ‡." With these fierce and

* Isa. xxxvii. 24.

† Hab. ii. 8.

‡ Song iv. 8.

ravenous animals, the prophet Jeremiah joins the wolves of the evening, and sends them to lay waste the habitations of his guilty and unrepenting nation: "Wherefore a lion out of the forest shall slay them, and a wolf of the evenings shall spoil them; a leopard shall watch over their cities, every one that goeth out thence shall be torn in pieces; because their transgressions are many, and their backslidings are increased." Near the base of the mountains, the traveller is entertained with a more pleasing sight than the lion slumbering in his den, or the print of his feet in the snow; he sees the hart or the deer shooting from the steep, to quench his thirst in the stream *. It was when David wandered near the foot of Lebanon, driven by his unnatural son Absalom from Zion and the fountain of Israel, the scenes of divine manifestation, that he marked the rapid course of these animals to the rivulets which descended from the sides of the mountains. He saw the hart panting for the water brooks, and the sight reminded him of his former enjoyments, while the circumstances of the creature bore a striking analogy to his own situation and feelings at the time. The passage, in which, prompted by the casual incident, he poured out the ardent longings of his soul for the water of life, is wonderfully beautiful and tender: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so pants my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, the living God; when shall I come and appear before God †?"

Though the upper regions of Lebanon are unfit for the habitation of man, they still contribute to his advantage. From their accumulated snows, descend a thousand streams of pure and wholesome water, to irrigate the fields below, to clothe them with verdure, and enrich them with the choicest products. The fountains and the streams of Lebanon, furnish accordingly, a number of pleasing figures to the inspired writers. The church is described in the Song of Solomon, as a fountain of

* Maundrell's Trav.

† Psalm xlii. l.

gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon*. And the prophet, in reproof of the folly and perverseness of his people, demands: "Will a man leave the snow of Lebanon which cometh from the rock of the field? or, shall the cold flowing waters that come from another place be forsaken †?" No man, in the sober exercise of reason, would leave the pure and refreshing streams which descend from the sides of that stupendous mountain, for the miry puddle or the insipid waters of the cistern; yet, with still greater absurdity than such conduct betrays, had the chosen people of God forsaken the worship of his name, for the degrading and unprofitable service of idols.

The approach to Lebanon, is adorned with olive plantations, vineyards, and luxuriant fields; and its lower regions, besides the olive and the vine, are beautified with the myrtle, the styrax, and other odoriferous shrubs: and the perfume which exhales from these plants, is increased by the fragrance of the cedars, which crown the summits, or garnish the declivities of the mountain. The great rupture which runs a long way up into the mountain, and is on both sides exceedingly steep and high, is clothed from the top to the bottom with fragrant evergreens, and every where refreshed with streams, descending from the rocks in beautiful cascades; the work of divine wisdom and goodness. These cool and limpid streams uniting at the bottom, form a large and rapid torrent, whose agreeable murmur is heard over all the place, and adds greatly to the pleasure of that romantic scene‡. The fragrant odours wafted from the aromatic plants of this noble mountain, have not been overlooked by the sacred writers. The eulogium, which Christ pronounces on the graces of the church, contains the following direct reference: "The smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon;" and the prophet Hosea, in his glowing description of the future prosperity of Israel, converts the asser-

* Song iv. 15.

† Jer. xviii. 14.

‡ Maundrell.

tion of Solomon into a promise; "His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon."

The richness and flavour of the wines produced in its vineyards, have been celebrated by travellers in all ages. Rauwolf declares, that the wine which he drank at Canobin, a Greek monastery on mount Libanus, far surpassed any he had ever tasted. His testimony is corroborated by Le Bruin, who pronounces the wines of Canobin, better and more delicate, than are to be found any where else in the world*. They are red, of a beautiful colour, and so oily, that they adhere to the glass; these are so excellent, that our traveller thought he never tasted any kind of drink more delicious. The wines produced on other parts of the mountain, although in much greater abundance, are not nearly so good. To the delicious wines of Canobin, the prophet Hosea certainly refers in this promise; "They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon†."

De la Roque, who also visited Canobin, entirely agrees with these travellers in their account of the superior quality of its wines; and expresses his full conviction, that the reputation of the wines of Lebanon mentioned by the prophet, was well founded. Volney asserts indeed, that he found the wines of Lebanon of a very inferior quality; this may be true, and yet the testimony of these respectable travellers perfectly correct. He might not be presented with the most exquisite wine of Canobin, which has deservedly obtained so high a character; or the vintage of that year might be inferior. But whatever might be the reason, no doubt can be entertained concerning the accuracy of other equally credible witnesses, who, from their own experience, and with one voice, attest the unrivalled excellence of the wine of Lebanon. These travellers admit, that the neighbourhood of Canobin produces wines of inferior

* Harmer's Observations.

† Hos. xiv. 7.

quality ; but, when the wine of Lebanon is mentioned by way of eminence, the best is undoubtedly meant.

In striking allusion to the scenery and productions of that mountain, it is promised in the sixth verse : “ His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell (or his memorial, as the original term signifies), as Lebanon.” His branches shall spread like the mighty arms of the cedar, every one of which is equal in size to a tree ; his beauty shall be as the olive tree, which is admitted, by all who have seen it, to be one of the most beautiful productions of nature ; and his smell, his very memorial, shall be as the wine of Lebanon, which delights the taste, and the very recollection of which excites the commendation of those that have drunk it, long after the banquet is over. The meaning of these glowing figures, undoubtedly is, that the righteous man shall prosper by the distinguishing favour of Heaven ; shall become excellent, and useful, and highly respected while he lives ; and after his death, his memory shall be blessed, and embalmed in the affectionate recollection of the church, for the benefit of many who had not the opportunity of profiting by his example.

The fragrant odour of the wines produced in the vineyards of Lebanon, seems chiefly to have attracted the notice of our translators. This quality is either factitious or natural. The orientals, not satisfied with the fragrance emitted by the essential oil of the grape, frequently put spices into their wines to increase their flavour. To this practice, Solomon alludes in these words : “ I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate*.” But Savary, in his *Letters on Greece*, affirms, that various kinds of naturally perfumed wines are produced in Crete : and the wine of Lebanon, to which the sacred writer alludes, was probably of the same species.

The cedar of Lebanon, has in all ages, been reckoned an object of unrivalled grandeur and beauty in the vegetable kingdom. It is accordingly, one of the natural images which fre-

* Song viii, 2.

quently occur in the poetical style of the Hebrew prophets; and is appropriated, to denote kings, princes, and potentates of the highest rank. Thus, the prophet Isaiah, whose writings abound with metaphors and allegories of this kind, in denouncing the judgments of God upon the proud and arrogant, declares, that “the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon all the cedars of Lebanon that are high and lified up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan*.” The king of Israel used the same figure, in his reply to the challenge of the king of Judah: “The thistle that was in Lebanon, sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter to my son to wife: and there passed by a wild beast that was in Lebanon, and trode down the thistle†.” The spiritual prosperity of the righteous man, is compared by the Psalmist, to the same noble plant: “The righteous shall flourish as the palm tree; he shall grow as the cedar in Lebanon.” Whatever is majestic and comely in the human countenance; whatever commands the reverence, and excites the love of the beholder,—Lebanon and its towering cedars are employed by the sacred writers to express. In the commendation of the church, the countenance of her Lord is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars: while in the eulogium which he pronounces upon his beloved, one feature of her countenance is compared to the highest peak of that mountain, to the Sannin, which rises with majestic grandeur above the tallest cedars that adorn its summits: “Thy nose is as the tower of Lebanon, which looketh toward Damascus‡.” Calmet imagines with no small degree of probability, that the sacred writer alludes to an elegant tower of white marble, which in his days, crowned the summit of a lofty precipice, at the foot of which the river Barrady foams, about the distance of two miles from Damascus. When Maundrell visited the place, he found a small structure like a sheick’s sepulchre, erected on the highest point of the precipice, where it had probably stood. From this elevated station, which forms a part

* Isa ii, 13.

† 2 Kings xiv. 9.

‡ Song vii. 4.

of Lebanon, the traveller enjoyed the most perfect view of the city. So charming was the landscape, so rich and diversified the scenery, that he confessedly found it no easy matter to tear himself away from the paradise of delights which bloomed at his feet.

To break the cedars, and shake the enormous mass on which they grow, are the figures that David selects, to express the awful majesty and infinite power of Jehovah; "The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty. The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars: yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon. He makes them also to skip like a calf: Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn*." This description of the divine majesty and power, possesses a character of awful sublimity, which is almost unequalled, even in the page of inspiration. Jehovah has only to speak, and the cedar which braves the fierce winds of heaven is broken, even the cedar of Lebanon, every arm of which rivals the size of a tree; he has only to speak, and the enormous mass of matter on which it grows, shakes to its foundation, till extensive, and lofty, and ponderous as it is, it leap like the young of the herd in their joyous frolics, and skip like the young unicorn, the swiftest of the four-footed race.

The stupendous size, the extensive range, and great elevation of Libanus; its towering summits capped with perpetual snow, or crowned with fragrant cedars; its olive plantations; its vineyards producing the most delicious vines; its clear fountains and cold-flowing brooks: its fertile vales and odoriferous shrubberies,—combine to form in Scripture language, "the glory of Lebanon." But that glory, liable to change, has, by the unanimous consent of modern travellers, suffered a sensible decline. The extensive forests of cedar, which adorned and perfumed the summits and declivities of those mountains, have almost disappeared. Only a small number of these "trees of God, planted by his almighty hand;" which, according to the usual

* Psal. xxix. 4.

import of the phrase, signally displayed the divine power, wisdom, and goodness, now remain. Their countless number in the days of Solomon, and their prodigious bulk, must be recollected, in order to feel the force of that sublime declaration of the prophet: "Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt-offering*." Though the trembling sinner were to make choice of Lebanon for the altar; were to cut down all its forests to form the pile; though the fragrance of this fuel, with all its odoriferous gums were the incense; the wine of Lebanon pressed from all its vineyards, the libation; and all its beasts, the propitiatory sacrifice; all would prove insufficient to make atonement for the sins of men; would be regarded as nothing in the eyes of the supreme Judge for the expiation of even one transgression. The just and holy law of God requires a nobler altar, a costlier sacrifice, and a sweeter perfume,—the obedience and death of a Divine Person to atone for our sins, and the incense of his continual intercession, to secure our acceptance with the Father of mercies, and admission into the mansions of eternal rest.

The conversion of the Gentile nations from the worship of idols and the bondage of corruption, to the service and enjoyment of the true God, is foretold in these beautiful and striking terms: "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them: and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon: they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God†." In the animated description which the same prophet gives of the prosperity to which the kingdom of Christ was destined to rise in the New Testament dispensation, the following allusion to the glory of Lebanon again occurs: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the

* Isa. xl. 16.

† Isa. xxxv. 4.

hills, and all nations shall flow unto it*.” By these words the prophet meant to inform his nation, what the event has fully verified, that the church of the Gentiles was to be of great extent, like the range of Lebanon, intersecting the country in various directions; was to be firmly established in the earth, like a fortress built upon the summits of a steep and lofty mountain; was to overcome all opposition, set at defiance the hostile movements of all her enemies, and regard with indifference or contempt, the envious exertions of every competitor; for “she shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto her.” The rapid growth of the New Testament church, her great extent, and the countless number of her converts, are finely described in the figurative language of the Psalmist: “There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon, and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth†.” The forests of the east, always near the point of ignition, under the intense beams of a vertical sun, from the carelessness or malice of those who take shelter in their recesses, are frequently set on fire; and the devouring element sometimes continues its ravages, till extensive plantations are consumed. To such a terrible conflagration, the prophet justly compares the destructive operations of the Roman armies under the command of Vespasian and Titus, against the nation of the Jews; when the nobles and rulers were slaughtered, the city and temple reduced to ashes, the people either put to the sword or sold into slavery, and the whole country laid waste: “Open thy doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour thy cedars. Howl, fir-tree, for the cedar is fallen; because the mighty is spoiled: howl, O ye oaks of Bashan; for the forest of the vintage is come down‡.”

Le Bruin concludes his description of Lebanon, with an account of the cedar apples, or the fruit which these celebrated trees produce. He cut one of them in two, and found, that the

* Isa. ii. 2.

† Psal. lxxii. 16.

‡ Zech. xi. 1.

smell within exactly resembled turpentine. They exuded a juice from small oval grains, with which a great many small cavities are filled, which also resembles turpentine, both in smell and in clamminess. These cedar apples must be classed with the scented fruits of the oriental regions; and have perhaps contributed greatly to the fragrance for which the sacred writers so frequently celebrate the mountains of Lebanon.

The north-east part of this mountain, adjoining to the Holy Land, is in Scripture distinguished by the name of Hermon; and is by consequence, mentioned as the northern boundary of the country beyond Jordan, and more particularly of the kingdom of Og, or of the half tribe of Manasseh on the east of that river*. It is known in the sacred volume by different names; the Sidonians called it Sirion, and the Amorites, Shenir. The Jewish lawgiver, in the book of Deuteronomy, gives it the name of Sion, (as it is spelt in the Hebrew text). "And they possessed his land, and the land of Og king of Bashan: --- from Aroer, which is by the bank of the river Arnon, even unto mount Sion, which is Hermon†." This mount Sion must not be confounded with the famous mountain of Jerusalem, which lay in a different part of the country, and was celebrated for a very different reason. In the book of Joshua, it is called Seir, which is only another way of reading Shenir. Halak is mentioned in the same verse, and seems to be a contiguous mountain in the great range of Lebanon, remarkable, as the name signifies, for its smoothness‡. Again, this mount Hermon is thought, not without probability, to be the same with mount Hor, mentioned by Moses in his description of the promised land: "And this shall be your north border; from the great sea, ye shall point out for you mount Hor; from mount Hor, ye shall point out your border unto the entrance of Hamath§." But Joshua, speaking of the lands which remained to be possessed, among other parts, mentions "all Lebanon, toward the sun rising, from Baalgad, (a valley) under mount Hermon,

* Deut. iii. 8, 9. † Deut. iv. 47, 48. ‡ Josh. xi. 17. § Num. xxxiv. 7, 8.

unto the entering into Hamath*.” By comparing these two passages, it seems extremely probable, that mount Hor is the same with mount Hermon. Both of them are placed in the same northern angle of the promised land, and bear the same relative situation to Hamath; and by consequence, the same mountain is intended under two different names.

But, besides this mount Hermon in the northern border of the country beyond Jordan, we read of another mountain of the same name, lying within the land of Canaan, on the west of the river Jordan, not far from mount Tabor. To this mountain, the holy Psalmist is thought to refer in these words: “The north and the south, thou hast created them: Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name†;” and in the following passage: “As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descends upon the mountains of Sion‡.”

Maundrell, in his journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem, had a full view of Tabor and Hermon, at about six or seven hours distance to the eastward, and learnt from experience, what the Psalmist means by the dew of Hermon, the tents of the whole party being as wet with it as if it had rained all night.

Another branch of Lebanon, which extended for a considerable way along the eastern coast of the country beyond Jordan, is mount Gilead, where Laban overtook Jacob in his return to his father's house; and being warned of God in a dream, not to injure the patriarch, made a covenant with him, and in witness of the solemn transaction, in conjunction with his son-in-law, made a heap of stones, and entertained their followers upon it, in token of sincere and lasting friendship. From this incident, the place was called Galeed, the heap, or, as the name properly signifies, the round heap, or circle of witness, and Mizpah, a beacon or watch-tower; for, said Laban to his son-in-law: “The Lord watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another, if thou shalt afflict my daughters, or if thou shalt take other wives beside my daughters, no man

* Josh. xiii. 5.

† Psal. lxxxix. 12.

‡ Psal. cxxxiii. 3.

is with us; see, God is witness between me and thee*." That this was done in a mountain, we are expressly told; and from the name given to the heap of stones constructed on that occasion, the whole mount, together with the circumjacent country, received in succeeding times, the name of Gilead. It lies on the east of the sea of Galilee, forming part of the ridge of mountains which runs from mount Lebanon toward the south on the east of Canaan; and included the mountainous region, called in the New Testament, Trachonitis.

From the other name given to the heap of stones cast up between Laban and Jacob, the city or town of Mizpah, built in future times near the scene of their confederation, probably derived its name. Hence we find it among the cities pertaining to the half tribe of Manasseh, which settled in that region; and in the days of the Judges, it was chosen by Jephtha as the place of his residence, and the seat of his government, after the defeat of the Ammonites.

Before the reduction of the country beyond Jordan, Gilead seems to have formed a part of the kingdom over which Og swayed the sceptre. "I gave," said Moses, "unto the half tribe of Manasseh, all the region of Argob, with all Bashan. --- Jair the son of Manasseh took all the country of Argob --- and I gave Gilead unto Machir†."

But, besides this mount Gilead beyond Jordan, we read of another mountain of that name on the west side of the river, in the lot of the children of Joseph, where Gideon assembled the forces with which he defeated the Midianites. As that renowned captain seems to have pitched his camp on the west side of the river Jordan, a difficulty has been started concerning the mountain on which he assembled his troops, which has greatly perplexed commentators and other writers. Gilead, according to some of these writers, must be understood here as denoting the tribe of Manasseh in general, and by consequence, applicable to both the half tribes, as well that on the west as

* Gen. xxxi. 48.

† Deut. iii. 13.

that on the east side of the river. In this view, mount Gilead here denotes no more than the *mount lying in Manasseh*; and so may be understood of Gilboa, near to which Gideon was encamped. Dr Wells, who quotes this opinion, is disposed to admit a corruption in the text, from the mistake of some transcriber, who wrote Gilead instead of Gilboa. This mode of removing the difficulty has the advantage of being both easy and quite in the fashion; but, as the necessary effect of it is to make the sacred Scriptures speak any language, and deliver any doctrine the critic pleases, it ought never to be adopted, except in cases of extreme necessity. It is certainly of considerable weight, that the present reading is followed by all the old versions; and there is nothing unreasonable in supposing, that two mountains in different parts of the country might, for reasons that can no longer be discovered, be distinguished by the same name. Dr Wells himself admits, that Brocard the monk, in his description of the Holy Land, mentions a mount Gilead situate towards Jezreel, and consequently towards the mountains of Gilboa; which is quite consistent with the history of Gideon.

The mountains of Abarim lie beyond Jordan, in the southern division of the country. One part of these mountains, or hills, was distinguished by the names of mount Nebo and Pisgah. God said unto Moses, "Get thee up into this mountain Abarim, unto mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, over against Jericho*." And that this was the same as mount Pisgah, from whose summit Moses obtained a sight of the promised land, and where he terminated a career of greater glory than ever fell to the lot of any mortal, may be inferred from the following words: "And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah that is over against Jericho†. From this account it seems probable, that Pisgah was the highest pinnacle of Nebo, a mountain in the great range of Abarim; for the term Pisgah

* Deut. xxxii. 49.

† Ch. xxxiv. 1.

may be derived from a root which signifies to *elevate or raise up*; and therefore may justly denote the top or the loftiest peak of that mountain. But on the other hand, Eusebius has observed, that Aquila who translated the Bible into Greek, uniformly rendered the Hebrew word Pisgah, by a Greek word signifying *cut out*; and that the Seventy interpreters in some places render it after the same manner. Whence some conjecture, that in one part of mount Nebo, steps were cut out in order to facilitate the ascent; and that this part more properly bore the name of Pisgah. But those who favour this opinion, have not been able to produce any Hebrew root, which might warrant the version of these celebrated interpreters; and it is more natural to suppose, that this particular summit owed its name to its great elevation, and the extensive prospect which it commanded. The conjecture certainly receives some countenance, from the circumstance that Moses was directed to take his station on that part of the mountain, for the purpose of viewing the promised land.

Eusebius and Jerome inform us, that some part of this ridge of mountains that was seen as one went up from Livies to Esbus, or Heshbon, retained the old name of Abarim so late as their times; and that the part peculiarly called mount Nebo, was over against Jericho, not far from Jordan, and six miles west from Esbus*.

On the south of Canaan lay mount Seir, whither Esau retired from the presence of his brother Jacob. This mountainous country was originally inhabited by the Horites, or Horims, the descendants of Hor or Hori, from whom the mountain was afterwards called mount Hor. It was on a mountain of this name, by the coasts of Edom, that Aaron died. It is therefore probable, that the whole tract was formerly called mount Hor; since we find that the inhabitants were formerly called Horites. "The Horims also dwelt in Seir beforetime; but the children of Esau succeeded them, when they had de-

* Well's Geog. vol 1. p. 285.

stroyed them before them, and dwelt in their stead*." Mount Hor, in the course of ages, exchanged its primitive appellation for Seir, the name of a distinguished Horite, probably the most powerful chieftain among those hardy mountaineers. This is no ideal personage; for Moses expressly mentions him, and enumerates his descendants in the close of the same chapter, where he gives us an account of the sons of Esau†. The land of Edom was situate between the lake Asphaltites and the Arabian gulf. The sacred writer affirms, that it extended as far as the Red sea: "And king Solomon made a navy of ships in Ezion-geber, which is beside Eloth, on the shore of the Red sea, in the land of Edom‡." But, if Ezion-geber was both on the shore of the Red sea and in the land of Edom, the dominions of Esau must have extended to the Arabian gulf. This, in the opinion of Dr Wells, is the true reason that the Arabian gulf came to have the name of the Red sea; which means no more than the sea of Edom, or Idumean sea. As this country was called the land of Edom, from Esau, who for selling his birth-right for some red pottage, was named Edom, which in the Hebrew tongue signifies *red*; so, from the country, as is usual, the adjoining sea took the name of the sea of Edom§. Beyond mount Seir to the westward, runs a ridge of mountains, which separates Canaan from Arabia, and which seems to be denoted in Scripture by the name of the mountain of the Amorites; some of whose branches run up northward to Hebron.

Gilboa was, according to Jerome and Eusebius, a ridge of mountains, six miles distant from Scythopolis, or Bethshan; among which stood a town of the same name. These mountains were remarkable for the death of Saul and Jonathan, and the total defeat of their forces in a general battle with the Philistines; an event which the holy Psalmist laments in the most tender elegaic strains: "The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places; how are the mighty fallen! Ye moun-

* Deut. ii, 12. † Gen. xxxvi. 20. ‡ 1 Kings ix, 26. § Well's, vol. 1. p. 188.

tains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain upon you, nor fields of offerings: for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the shield of Saul as though he had not been anointed with oil *."

The only remarkable mountain on the western border of Canaan, is Carmel, which lies on the sea coast, at the south end of the tribe of Asher, and is frequently mentioned in the sacred writings. On this mountain, which is very rocky, and about two thousand feet in height, the prophet Elijah fixed his residence; and the monks of the Greek church, who have a convent upon it, shew the inquisitive stranger the grotto neatly cut out in the solid rock, where, at a distance from the tumult of the world, the venerable seer reposed. At the distance of a league are two fountains, which they pretend the prophet by his miraculous powers made to spring out of the earth; and lower down, towards the foot of the mountain, is the cave where he instructed the people. It is an excavation in the rock, cut very smooth both above and below, of about twenty paces in length, fifteen in breadth, and very high; and Thevenot, who paid a visit to the monks of mount Carmel, pronounces it one of the finest grottoes that can be seen. The beautiful shape and towering height of Carmel, furnish Solomon with a striking simile expressive of the loveliness and majesty of the church in the eyes of her Redeemer; "Thine head upon thee is like Carmel; and the hair of thine head like purple; the King is held in the galleries †." The mountain itself is, by the account of Thevenot, nothing but rock. The monks, however, have with great labour covered some parts of it with soil, on which they cultivate flowers and fruits of various kinds; but the fields around have been celebrated in all ages for the extent of their pastures, and the richness of their verdure. So great was the fertility of this region, that in the language of the sacred writers, the name Carmel is often equivalent to a fruitful field. This was undoubtedly the rea-

* 2 Sam. i. 19,

† Song vii. 5.

son that the covetous and churlish Nabal chose it for the range of his numerous flocks and herds*.

Carmel was one of the barriers of the promised land, which Sennacherib boasted he would take with the multitude of his horses and his chariots: "I will enter into the lodgings of his borders, and into the forest of his Carmel †." Ungrateful as the soil of this mountain is, the wild vines and olive trees that are still found among the brambles which encumber its declivities, prove that the hand of industry has not laboured among the rocks of Carmel in vain. So well adapted were the sides of this mountain to the cultivation of the vine, that the kings of Judah covered every improveable spot with vineyards and plantations of olives. Its deep and entangled forests, its savage rocks and lofty summit, have been in all ages the favourite retreat of the guilty or the oppressed. The fastnesses of this rugged mountain are so difficult of access, that the prophet Amos classes them with the deeps of hell, the height of heaven and the bottom of the sea: "Though they dig into hell (or the dark and silent chambers of the grave), thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down; and though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence; and though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the serpent, and he shall bite them ‡." The church, in her most afflicted state, is compared to a fugitive lurking in the deep recesses of this mountain: "Feed thy people with thy rod, the flock of thine heritage which dwell solitarily in the wood in the midst of Carmel §." Lebanon raises to heaven a summit of naked and barren rocks, covered for the greater part of the year with snow; but the top of Carmel, how naked and sterile soever its present condition, seems to have been clothed with verdure in the days of Amos, which seldom was known to fade: "And he said, the Lord will roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem,

* 1 Sam. xxv. 2. † 2 Kings xix. 23. ‡ Am. ix. 2, 3. § Mic. vii. 14.

and the habitation of the shepherds shall mourn, and the top of Carmel shall wither*." These are the excellencies answering to the "glory of Lebanon," for which this mountain was so greatly renowned. Even the lofty genius of Isaiah, stimulated and guided by the Spirit of inspiration, could not find a more appropriate figure to express the flourishing state of the Redeemer's kingdom, than "the excellency of Carmel and Sharon."

Tabor is a lofty mountain of a conical form, which rises in the plain of Esdraelon, at two hours distance eastward from Nazareth. After a very laborious ascent of near an hour, Maundrell reached the highest part of the mountain; which has a plain area at the top, fertile and pleasant, of an oval figure, extended about one furlong in breadth, and two in length. This area is enclosed with trees on all sides, except towards the south. It was anciently surrounded with walls, and trenches, and other fortifications, many remains of which are still to be seen. From the top of Tabor, the traveller enjoys an extensive and beautiful prospect, that fully compensates him for the labour of climbing the steep ascent. In Maundrell's opinion, "it is impossible for the eyes of man to behold an higher gratification of this nature." To the south, he discovered a series of valleys and mountains which extends as far as Jerusalem; while to the east, the valley of Jordan and the lake of Tiberias, appeared to expand under his feet; beyond this, the eye loses itself towards the plains of the Hauran, and then turning to the north by the mountains of Hasbeya, reposes on the fertile plains of Galilee, without being able to reach the sea†. On the lofty summit of this beautiful mountain, by the constant and universal suffrage of antiquity, our Saviour was transfigured before his disciples: when the fashion of his countenance was altered, his face shone like the sun, and his raiment became white and glistening‡.

Among the pastoral districts of Canaan, the kingdom of

* Am. i. 2.

† Maundrell and Volney's Trav.

‡ Luke ix. 29.

Bashan holds a distinguished place ; it is a rough mountainous tract, lying between the hills of Gilead and the river Jordan. On account of the rugged nature of the surface, it was called by the Greeks, Trachonitis, or the rough mountainous country. It furnishes the sacred writers with many beautiful allusions and apt illustrations. The holy Psalmist celebrates in the songs of Zion, with his inimitable energy, the elevation of its hills and mountains, and the strength and beauty of its oaks : “ The hill of God is as the hill of Bashan, an high hill as the hill of Bashan*.” Thus, the inspired bard reckoned it the highest praise he could give to the mount, where he spread the tabernacle for the ark of Jehovah, that it resembled the hills of that country. In one particular, the hill of Zion far excelled them, clothed as they were with verdant pastures, and covered with flocks and herds ; it was the *hill of God*, of which he had said, “ this is my rest, here will I dwell, for I have desired it.” So beautiful and stately were the oaks of Bashan, that the prophet Isaiah classes them with the cedars of Lebanon, to express by a striking metaphor, the great, the mighty, and the noble, who, by their pride and arrogance, had incurred the righteous displeasure of the Most High. To form a just idea of the force and delicacy of the picture, it is necessary to quote the passage : “ Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty. The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of man shall be bowed down ; and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he shall be brought low ; and upon all the cedars of Lebanon that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan†.” These verses, as Dr Louth justly observes, afford us a striking example of that peculiar way of writing, which makes a principal characteristic of the parabolical or poetical style of the Hebrews, and in which their pro-

* Psal. lxxiii. 15.

† Isa. vi. 6.

phets deal so largely; namely, their manner of exhibiting things divine, spiritual, moral, and political, by a set of images taken from things natural, artificial, religious, historical, in the way of metaphor or allegory. Of these, nature furnishes much the largest and the most pleasant share; and all poetry has chiefly recourse to natural images, as the richest and most powerful source of illustration. But it may be observed of the Hebrew poetry in particular, that in the use of such images, and in the application of them in the way of illustration and ornament, it is more regular and constant, than any other poetry whatever; that it has for the most part, a set appropriated in a manner to the explication of certain subjects. Thus, you will find in many other places besides this before us, that the cedars of Lebanon, and the oaks of Bashan, are used in the way of metaphor and allegory, for kings, princes, potentates of the highest rank; high mountains and lofty hills for kingdoms, republics, states, cities; towers and fortresses for defenders and protectors, whether by counsel or by strength, in peace or war; ships of Tarshish, and works of art, and inventions employed in adorning them, for merchants, men enriched by commerce, and abounding in all the luxuries and elegancies of life.

This rule, which the inspired writers universally follow in the use of their metaphors, accounts for the animated address of the prophet: "Howl, fir tree, for the cedar is fallen, because the mighty are spoiled. Howl, O ye oaks of Bashan, for the forest of the vintage is come down*." The power of the nations whom Jehovah dispossessed, to plant his chosen people in their stead, is most beautifully illustrated by the same figures; "Yet destroyed I the Amorite before them, whose height was like the height of the cedars, and he was strong as the oaks; yea, I destroyed his fruit from above, and his roots from beneath†." We may judge of the high estimation, in which the oaks of these mountains were held, from a clause in the pro-

* Zech. xi. 2.

† Am. ii. 9.

phesies of Ezekiel, where, in describing the power and wealth of ancient Tyre, he says; “Of the oaks of Bashan have they made thine oars*.”

Bashan, for the extent and luxuriance of its pastures, and for the superior breed of its flocks and herds, was the boast of shepherds and the pride of Jordan: therefore, continues the prophet, “A voice of the howling of the shepherds, for their glory is spoiled; a voice of the roaring of young lions, for the pride of Jordan is spoiled.” So renowned were the pastures of this country, that, when the prophet Micah foretels the restoration of his people, and their rapid prosperity under the fostering care of Jehovah, he cries out, “Let them feed in Bashan and in Gilead, as in days of old†.” The prophet Jeremiah, in his description of the same scene, adopts the figure of Micah, with little variation; a strong additional proof of the great estimation in which the pastures of this country were held among the ancient Jews: “And I will bring Israel again to his habitation, and he shall feed on Carmel and Bashan, and his soul shall be satisfied upon mount Ephraim and Gilead‡.” The cattle that grazed on these verdant mountains, were remarkable for their size, their strength, and fatness. Moses, in his dying song, makes “butter of kine, and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats with the fat of kidneys of wheat,” a distinguished part of that portion which God bestowed on his peculiar people. The oppressions of Israel, are frequently compared to the strong and fierce cattle reared in the same region: “Strong bulls of Bashan,” cried the Psalmist, in the name of the Saviour, “have beset me around§.” When God announced his fearful judgments by the mouth of Ezekiel, an invitation is addressed to the fowls of heaven, and the beasts of the field; “Gather yourselves together on every side to my sacrifice, that I do sacrifice for you, a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh and drink blood. Ye shall eat the flesh of the

* Ezek. xxvii. 6.

† Mic. vii. 14.

‡ Jer. l. 19.

§ Psal. xxii.

mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth, of lambs, of rams, and of goats, of bullocks, all of them fatlings of Bashan*.” Amos uses the same figure in reproving Israel for oppression; “Hear this word, ye kine of Bashan that are in the mountain of Samaria, which oppress the poor, which crush the needy, which say to their masters, Bring and let us drink†.”

Salmon is a mountain which stood in the neighbourhood of Shechem, whose declivities were clothed with lofty woods, and its summits capped with snow. The two first circumstances are verified by a passage in the book of Judges, which is couched in these terms: “And it was told Abimelech, that all the men of the tower of Shechem were gathered together. And Abimelech gat him up to mount Zalmon, he and all the people that were with him; and Abimelech took an axe in his hand, and cut down a bough from the trees, and took it, and laid it on his shoulder, and said to the people that were with him, what ye have seen me do, make haste, and do as I have done. And all the people likewise cut down every man his bough‡.” The last circumstance is mentioned by David, in a passage which has not been generally well understood: “When the Almighty scattered kings in it, it was white as snow in Salmon§.” The venerable Henry, in his excellent Commentary, thinks, the royal bard refers to the church; and renders the words, “When the Almighty scattered kings in her, she was white or purified, as snow in Salmon.” But the common translation is perfectly correct; and the inspired writer seems to refer not to the church, but to the means which God employed in defeating her enemies. The scene to which the Psalmist alludes, is the discomfiture of the Amorite, by a miraculous storm of hail, which Joshua thus describes: “And the Lord discomfited them before Israel, and slew them with a great slaughter in Gibeon, and chased them along the way that goeth up to Beth-horon, and smote them to Azekah, and to Makedah.

* Ezek. xxxix. 18. † Am. iv. 1. ‡ Jud. ix. 47, 48. § Psal. lxyiii. 14.

And it came to pass as they fled before Israel, and were in the going down to Beth-horon, that the Lord cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died: they were more who died with hailstones, than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword*." These great and most destructive hailstones, appear to have covered all the ground from Beth-horon, a town which lay in the south border of the tribe of Ephraim, unto Azekah, which is mentioned in the book of Joshua, among the cities of the tribe of Judah, "and made it as white as the top of Salmon."

It only remains now, to take notice of the mountains or hills, in or near Jerusalem, which occur in the sacred history of the Old Testament. The celebrated mountain of Zion, on whose summit stood the city of David, and where the ark of the covenant rested under the tent which that pious monarch had pitched for it, has the first claim on our attention. From the presence of the ark, it is frequently styled in the book of Psalms, the holy hill. It is sometimes used in Scripture, to denote the whole city of Jerusalem; and by consequence, the mount Moriah, on which, in times of very remote antiquity, Abraham offered up his son; and in an age long posterior, the temple of Jehovah was built to be the centre of his worship and the place of his rest. The holy hill of Zion stood, according to some writers, in the north part of Jerusalem; but the more probable and general opinion is, that it is the same hill which is taken for Zion in modern times, situate on the south of the present city, for the most part without the walls. But when Jerusalem was in the height of her power and splendour, in the reigns of Solomon and David, mount Zion was enclosed within the walls, and formed the southern district of that celebrated metropolis. Before it was taken by David from the Jebusites, as has been formerly observed, it seems to have been a kind of citadel; for it is expressly called the fort or the strong hold of Zion. It was higher than the hill on which

* Josh. x, 10.

old Jerusalem was built; for this appears to be the hill which Josephus distinguishes by the name of Acra; and he says expressly, that the hill on which the upper city stood was higher. But the upper city is allowed by all to be the same with the city of David; and the Scripture asserts the city of David to be the same with the strong hold of Zion.

The only other eminence deserving of notice, is the mount of Olives; a name certainly derived from the number of olive trees with which it was covered. It lay on the east side of Jerusalem, a little out of the city, commanding a full view of that metropolis, from which it was separated by the brook Kidron, and the valley of Jehoshaphat. It is a part of a long ridge of hills extending from north to south, with three summits. Josephus reckons its distance from the city to be about five furlongs; which is most probably to be understood of the nearest part, or bottom of the mountain in that direction. The statement of the historian is therefore quite reconcileable with the narrative of the inspired writer, who makes it a sabbath day's journey distant from Jerusalem, or eight furlongs; for the evangelist in all probability, refers to that part of the mountain from whence our Lord ascended into heaven, which is supposed to be the central elevation.

In Maundrell's account of his visit to this mountain, we are informed, that going out of Jerusalem at St Stephen's gate, and crossing the valley of Jehoshaphat, he and his party began immediately to ascend. About two-thirds of the way up, they came to certain grottoes cut with intricate windings, and caverns under ground; these are called the sepulchres of the prophets. A little higher, are twelve arched vaults under ground, standing side by side; these were built in memory of the twelve apostles, and where tradition says, they compiled their creed. But leaving the uncertain tales of tradition, as unworthy of further notice, it may be observed, on the most unexceptionable authority, that the mount of Olives became famous in the history of the Saviour. To this mountain, it was

his custom to retire in the evening, after he had spent a laborious day in teaching the multitudes that attended his ministry in Jerusalem; it was from one of its summits that he beheld the city, and wept over it, and predicted its final destruction; in the garden which lay at the bottom, he commenced the scene of his last sufferings for the sins of his people; and from the highest peak, as is generally supposed, after he had finished the work of our redemption on earth, he ascended into his Father's presence with unspeakable joy and glory.

To the hill of Zion, and the other mountains around, the sacred writers frequently and triumphantly allude. The references are so numerous, that only one or two can be quoted; and so easy, as to occasion no difficulty. The first is a beautiful allusion to the situation of Jerusalem, environed with mountains and rocks, which oppose a powerful barrier to the incursions of an enemy; "They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever; as the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people, from henceforth even for ever*." The description which Volney gives of his approach to Jerusalem, furnishes no contemptible illustration of these verses; and as it is pleasant to compel an avowed infidel to illustrate and confirm the religion of Christ, which he detests, I shall subjoin his account. "Two days' journey south of Nablous, following the direction of the mountains, which gradually become more rocky and barren, we arrive at a town, which like many others already mentioned, presents a striking example of the vicissitude of human affairs: when we behold its walls levelled, its ditches filled up, and all its buildings embarrassed with ruins, we scarcely can believe we view that celebrated metropolis, which formerly baffled the efforts of the most powerful empires, and for a time resisted the efforts of Rome herself; though by a whimsical change of fortune, its ruins now receive her homage and reverence: in a word, we with difficulty recognise Jerusa-

* Psal. cxxiv. 2.

lem. Nor is our astonishment less, to think of its ancient greatness, when we consider its situation amidst a rugged soil, destitute of water, and surrounded by dry channels of torrents and steep heights. Distant from every great road, it seems neither to have been calculated for a considerable mart of commerce, nor the centre of a great consumption. It however overcame every obstacle, and may be adduced as a proof of what popular opinion may effect, in the hands of an able legislature, or when favoured by happy circumstances." The proud unbeliever had found a shorter and easier road to his conclusion, in the volume of inspiration; and particularly in the passages quoted above, from the Psalms of David, who refers the singular prosperity of Jerusalem to the peculiar favour of Heaven. This was the real source of her greatness, and it was this alone, and not the natural strength of her situation, nor the skill and valour of her defenders, which enabled her so long to baffle the designs of her enemies. This important and instructive truth the royal Psalmist acknowledges in the other passage to which I alluded, in the liveliest strains of devout gratitude: "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north the city of the great king. For lo, the kings were assembled, they passed by together, they saw it, so they marvelled: they were troubled; they hastened away. Fear took hold upon them there, and pain as of a woman in travail*." Behind the walls and bulwarks of salvation, contrived by the wisdom, and appointed by the distinguishing love of Jehovah, that highly favoured people, so long as they remained faithful to the covenant of their God, reposed in safety, and laughed at the shaking of the hostile spear: but when they forsook the service of Jehovah, for the worship of dumb idols, the impenetrable shield of divine favour and protection was withdrawn, and they became an easy prey to the invader; or, if, listening only to their own furious passions and infatuated counsels, they resisted his efforts for a time, it was only to ag-

* Psal. xlviii. 2, 3.

gravate their sufferings, and render their destruction more certain and complete.

CHAP. VIII.

THE LAKES AND RIVERS OF PALESTINE.

THE only considerable lakes in the land of Promise, are those of Tiberias, and the Salt sea. The lake of Tiberias was also known to the sacred writers, by the name of the sea of Galilee, and the lake of Gennesareth. It was called the sea of Tiberias, from a town of that name on its western border; the sea of Galilee, from the province of Galilee in general; and the lake of Gennesareth, from that particular tract of Galilee which skirted its western shore. The breadth of this lake or sea is forty, and the length an hundred furlongs *. Its water is limpid, sweet and wholesome: and lying upon gravel, is softer than the water either of a river or fountain; and at the same time so cold, that, says the Jewish historian, it cannot be warmed by exposure to the sun, in the hottest season of the year. It abounds in a great variety of fish, which for taste and shape, are peculiar to itself. The lake of Tiberias is properly a dilatation of the river Jordan; which through the middle of it pursues his course to the Dead sea. The country on both sides, is uncommonly fruitful and pleasant. So fertile is the soil, that every plant thrives in it; and so great is the felicity of the climate, that nuts, palms, figs, and olive trees, flourish here in great profusion, although they naturally require a quite different temperature; which, observes the historian, looks as if Providence took delight in this place, to reconcile contradictions; and as if the very seasons themselves were in a competition, which should be most obliging. The durable character of the fruits

* Josephus.

produced in this delightful region, is not less remarkable than their great variety and excellence. Figs and grapes continue in season there ten months in the year; and other fruits the whole year round. Gennesareth is not more celebrated for its delicious air and temperature, than for a spring of living waters, clear as crystal, to which the natives give the name of Capernaum; which some have considered as a little gut of the Nile, because it contains a species of fish no where else to be found, but in the neighbourhood of Alexandria. The length of the country along the lake is about four miles, and the breadth four miles and a half. This district was, in the time of Josephus, inhabited by a skilful and industrious people, who, wisely availing themselves of the singular advantages which the soil and climate of their highly favoured country afforded them, carried the improvement of their lands to the highest degree of perfection. From the extraordinary fruitfulness of this tract, some conjecture, that the word Gennesareth is compounded of two words, Gan and Sar; of which the first denotes in Hebrew a garden, the last a prince; and consequently the compound, the garden of a prince, or a princely garden. But, although the name in this view sufficiently corresponds with the nature of the country, it is more probable that the word Gennesareth, in the New Testament, owes its existence to the term Chinnereth or Cinnereth in the Old; for, in the days of Joshua, Cinnereth was a fortified city in the tribe of Naphtali*; and it is evident from a passage in the 1st book of Kings, that it gave its name to the surrounding country†. The Jewish legislator in several parts of his writings, and Joshua in the history of his proceedings, place the city of Chinnereth on the shore of the lake Tiberias, calling it by the same name, the sea of Chinnereth‡. Hence it is more than probable, that Gennesareth in the New Testament, is only a corruption of Cinnereth, the name by which the city and the lake on which it

* Josh. xix. 35.

† 1 Kings xv. 20.

‡ Num. xxxiv. 11. Deut. iii. 17. Josh. xii. 3.

stood, were known to the ancient Israelites. The city had indeed perished in the wars between the kings of Syria and Israel, long before the coming of Christ, which is the true reason that no mention is made of it in the New Testament, while the district where it stood, retained its name for many ages after its fall. The date of its destruction may, with great probability, be fixed in the reign of Baasha king of Israel, about nine hundred and fifty-eight years before Christ, when Benhadad king of Syria invaded his dominions, and “smote Ijon, and Dan, and Abel-beth-maachah, and all Cinnereth, with all the land of Naphtali*.” Upon the ruins of ancient Cinnereth, afterwards arose the city of Capernaum, deriving its name from the excellent fountain already mentioned, near which it was built; but the lake and the adjacent lands were permitted to retain their ancient name, till in the lapse of ages, or by a change of dialect, it was moulded into Gennesareth. It was a common saying among the Jews, in reference to the lake of Gennesareth, that *God loved that sea more than all the other seas*. And, in one sense, the observation is quite correct; for it was honoured above all others, with the presence of our blessed Lord and Saviour, both before and after his resurrection. He made choice of Capernaum, which stood upon the margin of the lake, as his ordinary place of residence; on account of which it is called *his own city*†. On its shores, he found several of his apostles pursuing the humble employment of fishermen, and called them to be the witnesses of his mighty works, and the heralds of his kingdom. It was on this sea he came to them walking upon the water; where he rebuked the winds and the waves, and the furious storm was in a moment changed into a profound calm; and where he filled their nets with a miraculous draught of fishes. On the shore of this lake, he appeared to his disciples after his resurrection; and, after rebuking Peter for his unfaithfulness, and exacting a threefold confession, corresponding to his threefold denial.

* 1 Kings xv. 20.

† Mat. ix. 1.

restored him to his office as an apostle, and to his station as a pillar in the church.

The only other lake connected with the illustration of Scripture, is the Salt sea, or Asphaltites. This remarkable expanse of water, covers the fruitful vale where once flourished the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, with the other cities of the plain; a vale so rich and beautiful, that the sacred historian compares it to the garden of paradise*. The original name of this delicious region was Siddim: "All these were joined together in the vale of Siddim, which is the Salt sea†." Hence it may be inferred with absolute certainty, that when the cities were destroyed, the very ground where they stood, which had been polluted by the enormous wickedness of the inhabitants, suffered a complete and permanent change. This is confirmed by the sacred historian in the following terms: "Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah, brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven. And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground‡." Not satisfied with overthrowing the cities and destroying their inhabitants, the righteous Judge also overthrew all the plain, that is, he consumed its productions, he destroyed its beauty, he extinguished the very principles of its fertility, and submerged the ground itself under the waters of the Jordan, that the foot of man might never tread it more. The destruction was complete and irreparable; the country was in a manner extinguished, by converting it into a deep lake: so fierce was the indignation, so terrible the overthrow. Thus were the cities of the plain, and the ground on which they stood, set forth for an example to every succeeding age; and to that awful catastrophe the sacred writers often allude, in their denunciations of the divine judgments against apostate Israel: "When the generations to come shall see that the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning; that it is not

* Gen. xiii. 10.

† Gen. xiv. 3.

‡ Gen. xix. 24.

sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth thereon, (like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Ziboim, which the Lord overthrew in his anger and in his wrath); even all nations shall say, wherefore has the Lord done this unto this land*?" The prophet Hosea, pathetically describing the great mercy of God toward the people of Israel, and his unwillingness to punish them, notwithstanding their signal ingratitude, breaks out into the following animated address, in the name of the Lord: "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim; how shall I deliver thee Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah, how shall I set thee as Ziboim? My heart is turned within me, and my repentings are kindled together†."

The learned Michaelis ascribes the destruction of those cities to the agency of natural causes. It may be admitted, without offence to religion, that the sovereign Ruler of the universe put in operation such causes on that memorable occasion. Sodom was built upon a mine of bitumen, as we know from the testimony of Moses and Josephus, who speak of wells abounding with bitumen in the valley of Siddim. Lightning pointed by the hand of Omnipotence kindled the combustible mass, and the cities sunk in the subterraneous conflagration. Nor is the ingenious suggestion of M. Malte Brun to be omitted, that Sodom and Gomorrah themselves might have been built of bituminous stones, and then set in flames by the fire of heaven.

The particular situation of these five cities cannot now be discovered; but it is certain they all lay within the vale of Siddim. Of these, four were overwhelmed with a storm of fire and brimstone from heaven, on account of their hideous crimes: the fifth was spared at the earnest supplication of Lot, who chose it as the place of his retreat. The original name of this place was Bela; but from the argument urged by Lot for its preservation, "Is it not a little one;" it received the name of Zoar, or the little city, by which it was ever afterwards distinguished. As Zoar seemed to have been the least of the five

* Deut. xxiii. 23.

† Hos. xi. 8.

cities in the vale of Siddim, so Sodom seems to have been the most considerable, and Gomorrah next to it in wealth and greatness. This may be inferred from the destruction of the five cities being frequently denoted in Scripture, by the overthrow of Sodom alone: and from the arrangement of the sacred writers, who uniformly place Sodom at the head of the list, and next to it the city of Gomorrah.

The great importance of an abundant supply of water in those parts of the world, drew from the sacred historian the remark: "Now the plain of Jordan was well watered every where, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, (even like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt), as thou comest unto Zoar*." This clause, *as thou comest unto Zoar*, has much perplexed commentators, while they refer it to the land of Egypt, in the clause immediately preceding; but if what is said by way of comparison, *even like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt*, be inclosed in a parenthesis, the difficulty is removed, and the import of the last clause become plain and easy; "Before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, the plain of Jordan was well watered every where, as thou comest unto Zoar," the city in the vale of Siddim, to which Lot, at his earnest and repeated entreaty, was permitted to flee.

Dr Wells, from whose geography the solution now proposed is abridged, suggests another way of removing the difficulty, by supposing Zoar to be a false reading for Zoan. Such a supposition he thinks the more allowable, "not only because the difference lies in the change but of one letter, but also, because it appears that the Syriac translator actually read it so. If then, the original reading was Zoan, the last clause may be excellently well connected to the land of Egypt, in the clause immediately foregoing. For Zoan was a famous, and as is likely, in those days the capital city of Egypt, lying near or on the Nile; and on the lower part thereof, or not far from the sea

* Gen. xiii. 10.

coasts, where the said river is divided into several branches, and so the country more watered thereabout than in other parts. In short, it is thought to be, and is rendered by the Seventy interpreters, Tanis; from which one of the mouths of the Nile was denominated Ostium Tanaiticum, the Tanaitic mouth." According to this reading, the import of the verse will be this: The plain of Jordan was well watered every where; before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, as the garden of Eden, which was moistened by the united streams of the Tigris and Euphrates, or as the land of Egypt, particularly in the parts about Zoan, where the Nile, divided into several branches, irrigates the fields.

The lake Asphaltites is enclosed on the east and west with exceeding high mountains; on the north it is bounded with the plain of Jericho, on which side it receives the waters of the Jordan; on the south it is open, and extends beyond the reach of the eye. It is said to be twenty-four leagues long, and six or seven broad; and is fringed with a kind of coppice of bushes and reeds. In the midst of this border, not a furlong from the sea, rises a fountain of brackish water, which was pointed out to Maundrell by his Arab conductor; a sure proof that the soil is not equally impregnated with saline particles. The ground to the distance of half an hour from the sea, is uneven, and broken into hillocks, which Mr Maundrell compares to ruinous lime-kilns; but whether these might be the pits at which the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah were overthrown by the four kings who invaded their country, he could not determine.

The water of the lake is intensely salt, extremely bitter and nauseous, and so heavy, that the most impetuous winds can scarcely ruffle its surface. It is called by common writers the Dead sea, because it nourishes neither animal nor vegetable life. No verdure is to be seen on its banks, nor fish to be found within its waters; but it is not true that its exhalations are so pestiferous as to kill birds that attempt to fly over it. Mr Maundrell saw several birds flying about, and skimming

the surface of its waters, without any visible harm. The same fact is attested by Volney, who states it as no uncommon thing to see swallows dipping for the water necessary to build their nests. The true cause that deprives it of vegetables and animals, is the extreme saltness of the water, which is vastly stronger than that of the sea. The soil around it, impregnated also with salt, produces no plants; and the air itself, which becomes loaded with saline particles from evaporation, and which receives also the sulphureous and bituminous vapours, cannot be favourable to vegetation: hence the deadly aspect which reigns around this lake. The ground about it, however, is not marshy, and its waters are limpid and incorruptible, as must be the case with a dissolution of salt*. Mr Maundrell questions the truth of the common tradition, which is admitted by Volney in all its extent, that the waters of the Dead sea are destructive to animal existence, having observed among the pebbles on the shore two or three shells of fish, resembling oyster-shells. That respectable traveller willing to make an experiment of its strength, went into it, and found it bore up his body in swimming, with an uncommon force; but the relation of some authors, that men wading into it are buoyed up to the top as soon as the water reaches to the middle, he found upon experiment untrue.

A recent traveller on visiting the lake, found a crust of salt covering the surface of the ground, and resembling a snowy plain, from which a few stunted shrubs reared their heads. No murmur, no cooling breeze announced the approach to its margin. The strand bestrewed with stones was hot, the waters of the lake were motionless, and absolutely dead along the shore: he found it impossible to keep the water in his mouth; it far exceeded that of the sea in saltness, and produced upon the lips the effect of a strong solution of alum. Before his boots were completely dry, they were covered with salt; his clothes, his hat, his hands, in less than three hours, were impregnated with this mineral. About midnight he heard a noise upon the lake, and was in-

* Volney's Trav, vol. 1.

formed by the Arabs, that it proceeded from legions of small fish, which come and leap about on the shore.

Lavoisier analyzed its water, and found that 100 lbs. contain 45 lbs. 6 oz. of salt. The water is perfectly transparent, and so heavy, that persons who never learned to swim will float on its surface. It is now known, that bodies sink or float upon it, according to the proportion of their gravity to the gravity of its water. A strong breeze, without cooling the air, produced only a slight undulation on the bosom of the lake; the waves charged with salt soon subsided by their own weight, and scarcely broke against the shore*.

Desirous to see the remains, if any existed, of those cities anciently situate in this place, and made so dreadful an example of divine vengeance, Maundrell diligently surveyed the waters as far as his eye could reach; but he could neither discern any heaps of ruin, nor any smoke ascending above the surface of the waters, as is usually described in the writings and maps of geographers. But he states, what was confidently attested to him by the father guardian, and procurator of Jerusalem, both men in years, and seemingly not destitute either of sense or probity, that they had once actually seen one of these ruins; that it was so near the shore, and the water so shallow at that time, that they, together with some Frenchmen went into it, and found there several pillars, and other fragments of buildings. The cause of his being deprived of this sight was, he supposes, the height of the water.

On the shore he found a black sort of pebble, which, being held in the flame of a candle, soon burns, and yields a smoke of an intolerable stench. It has the property of losing only a part of its weight, but not of its bulk, in burning. The hills bordering upon the lake are said to abound with this kind of sulphureous stones. Maundrell saw pieces of it at the convent of St John, in the wilderness, two feet square. They were carved in bass-relief, and polished to as great a lustre as black marble

* Chateaubriand's Travels.

is capable of, and were designed for the ornament of the new church at the convent. He found none of the bitumen for which this lake has been so famous, at the place which he visited; but was informed, that it was gathered near the mountains, on both sides, in great plenty. Several lumps of it were brought to him at Jerusalem; it exactly resembles pitch, and cannot readily be distinguished from it, but by the sulphureousness of its smell and taste. On the west side of the sea is a small promontory, near which his guide told him stood the monument of Lot's metamorphosed wife; part of which, if they may be credited, is visible at this day. Mr Maundrell neither saw nor heard of the apples of Sodom, so frequently mentioned by the ancients; nor did he discover any tree near the lake, from which a fruit of that kind might be expected. It is a production which exists only in the imagination and song of the poet; and has perhaps been kept up so long, because it furnished him with a good allusion, or helped him to a beautiful simile*.

Several travellers, however, claim the honour of having discovered that far-famed apple. Hasselquist says, the apple of Sodom is not the fruit either of a tree or of a shrub, but the production of the *Solanum melongena* of Linnæus. It is found in great abundance round Jericho, in the vales near the Jordan, and in the neighbourhood of the Dead sea. Its apples are sometimes full of dust; but this appears only when the fruit is attacked by an insect, which converts the whole of the inside into dust, leaving nothing but the rind entire, without causing it to lose any of its colour.

M. Seetzen supposes it is the fruit of a tree which grows on the plain of El Gor, near the southern extremity of the Dead sea. The tree resembles a fig tree, and the fruit is like the pomegranate: it struck him, that this fruit which has no pulp or flesh in the inside, but only a species of cotton resembling silk, and is unknown in the rest of Palestine, might be the celebrated apple of Sodom.

* Maundrell's Trav.

Chateaubriand imagines that he has made the interesting discovery. The shrub which bears the true apple of Sodom, grows two or three leagues from the mouth of the Jordan; it is thorny, and has small taper leaves; its fruit is exactly like the little Egyptian lemon, both in size and colour: before it is ripe, it is filled with a corrosive and saline juice; when dried, it yields a blackish seed, which may be compared to ashes, and which resembles bitter pepper in taste.

The extreme saltiness of this lake, has been ascribed by Volney to mines of fossile salt in the side of the mountains, which extend along the western shore, and from time immemorial have supplied the Arabs in the neighbourhood, and even the city of Jerusalem. He does not attempt to invalidate the credit of the Mosaic narrative; but only insinuates, that these saline depositions were either coeval with the mountains in which they are found, or entered into their original conformation. The extraordinary fruitfulness of the vale of Siddim, before the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, is asserted by Moses in terms so clear and precise, that the veracity of the sacred writer must be overthrown, before a reasonable doubt can be entertained of the fact. No disproportionate quantity of saline matter, could then have been present either in the soil or in the surrounding mountains. That it abounded with bitumen, some have inferred from the assertion of Moses, that the vale of Siddim was full of slime pits: where the Hebrew word chemar, which we render slime, others, and particularly the Seventy interpreters, render bitumen. But gophrith, and not chemar, is the word that Moses employs to denote brimstone, in his account of the judgment which overwhelmed the cities of the plain; and by consequence, brimstone is not meant, when chemar is used, but bitumen, a very different substance. Hence the brimstone which now impregnates the soil of the Salt sea, and banishes almost every kind of vegetation from its shores, must be regarded, not as an original, but an accidental ingredient, remaining from the destruction of the vale by fire

and brimstone from heaven. The same remark applies to the mines of fossile salt, on the surrounding mountains; the saline matter was deposited in the cavities which it now occupies at the same time, else the vale of Siddim, instead of verdant pastures, and abundant harvests, had exhibited the same frightful sterility from the beginning, for which it is so remarkable in modern times. Bitumen, if the Hebrew word chemar denotes that substance, abounds in the richest soils; for in the vale of Shinar, the soil of which, by the agreement of all writers, is fertile in the highest degree, the builders of the tower of Babel used it for mortar. The ark of bulrushes in which Moses was embarked on the Nile, was in like manner daubed with bitumen (chemar), and pitch; but the mother of Moses, considering the poverty of her house, cannot be supposed to have procured it from a distance, nor at any great expense: she must therefore have found it in the soil of Egypt, near the Nile, on whose borders she lived. It is therefore reasonable to suppose, that bitumen abounded in Goshen, a region famed for the richness of its pastures. Hence it may be fairly concluded, that the vale of Siddim before its destruction, in respect of natural fertility, resembled the plain of Shinar, and the land of Egypt along the Nile. But it is well known, that wherever brimstone and saline matter abound, there sterility and desolation reign. Is it not then reasonable to infer, that the sulphureous and saline matters, discovered in the waters and on the shores of the Asphaltites, are the relics of the divine vengeance executed on the cities of the plain, and not original ingredients in the soil?

If we listen to the testimony of the sacred writers, what was reasonable hypothesis rises into absolute certainty. Moses expressly ascribes the brimstone, the salt, and the burning, in the overthrow of Sodom, to the immediate vengeance of heaven; "When they see the plagues of that land, - - that the whole land is brimstone, and salt, and burning; that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth thereon, (like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Ziboim, which the Lord

overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath); even all nations shall say, Wherefore has the Lord done thus unto this land? What meaneth the heat of this great anger*." In this passage, the brimstone, salt, and burning, are mentioned as true and proper effects of the divine wrath; and since this fearful destruction is compared to the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, the brimstone and salt into which the vale of Siddim was turned, must also be the true and proper effects of divine anger. This indeed, Moses asserts in the plainest terms: "Then the Lord rained upon Sodom, and upon Gomorrah, brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven; and he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground†." But since the brimstone and the fire were rained from heaven, so must the salt, with which they are connected in the former quotation: and this is the opinion received by the Jewish doctors. The frightful sterility which followed the brimstone, salt and burning, in the first quotation, is in the same manner represented as an effect of the divine judgment upon the vale of Siddim; "it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth thereon."

The barrenness and desolation that result from the action of brimstone and salt, are introduced by the prophet in these words: "Thus saith the Lord, Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh, but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land, and not inhabited‡". In this passage, the salt is assigned as the cause that the parched places in the wilderness remain in a state of perpetual sterility. In the judgments which the prophet Zephaniah was directed to predict against the kingdom of Moab, he alludes expressly to the punishment of Sodom and Gomorrah, and intimates, that one part of that punishment consisted

* Deut. xxix, 22.

† Gen. xix, 24.

‡ Jer. xvii, 5, 6.

in the vale being turned into salt : “ As I live, saith the Lord, --- Surely Moab shall be as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah, even the breeding of nettles and salt pits, and a perpetual desolation *.” The qualities of the lake which now covers the once fertile and delightful vale of Siddim, and the desolate appearance of the surrounding country, as has been already shewn, perfectly correspond with the words of the inspired writers, and the conclusions of reason.

Some writers suppose the Dead sea to be the crater of a volcano. But this opinion is entirely without foundation ; for all extinguished volcanoes exhibit the same characters, that is to say, mountains excavated in the form of a tunnel, lava and ashes, which exhibit incontestible proofs of the agency of fire. The Dead sea, on the contrary, is a lake of great length, curved like a bow, placed between two ranges of mountains, which have no natural coherence in form, no homogeneousness of soil. They do not meet at the two extremities of the lake ; but continue, the one to bound the valley of Jordan, and to run northward as far as the lake of Tiberias ; the other to stretch away to the south, till they are lost in the sands of Yemen. Bitumen, warm springs, and phosphoric stones are found, it is true, in the mountains of Arabia : but Chateaubriand met with none of these in the opposite chain. But then the presence of hot springs, sulphur, and asphaltos, is not sufficient to attest the anterior existence of a volcano.

The rugged mountains and spacious caverns on the southwest shore of the lake Asphaltites, the chosen refuge of the oppressed in every age, acquired additional celebrity from the secure retreat which they afforded to David and his men from the lawless violence of Saul. To this dreary scene, the inspired historian alludes in his memoir of the wanderings and perils of that illustrious exile : “ It was told Saul, saying, behold, David is in the wilderness of Engeddi. Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to

* Zeph. ii. 9.

seek David and his men upon the mountains of the wild goats*^v. In one of the capacious excavations, for which that pile of desolate rocks and precipices is distinguished, David had an opportunity, when Saul went in to cover his feet, by cutting off the skirt of his robe, of proving, at once, the purity of his intentions, and the magnanimity of his heart. Such an act of genuine heroism, ought to have extinguished for ever the groundless resentment and cruel jealousy of his prince; but Saul was the slave of ambition, and therefore dead to every sentiment of justice and humanity.

The rivers that water the land of Promise, are not so remarkable as the mountains and the lakes which diversify its surface. The greater part of them, as the Kidron, the Jabbok, and the Arnon, are only brooks or mountain torrents, some of which are dry for the greater part of the year, or only run with a flowing stream during the melting of the snows on the peaks of Lebanon, or the fall of the former and the latter rain. The Kishon, whose furious current swept away the routed legions of Sisera, though mentioned in Scripture as a river, is only a small stream, except when swelled by the rain or melting snow. "That ancient river" pursues his course down the middle of the plain of Esdraelon, and then passing close by the side of mount Carmel, falls into the sea at a place named Caypha. When Maundrell crossed this stream, on his way to Jerusalem, its waters were low and inconsiderable; but in passing along the side of the plain, he observed the tracts of many tributary rivulets falling down into it from the mountains, by which it must be greatly swelled in the rainy season. It was undoubtedly at the season when the Kishon, replenished by the streams of Lebanon, becomes a deep and impetuous torrent, that the bands of Sisera perished in its waters. The Kishon, like several other streams in Palestine, does not run with a full current into the sea, except in the time of the rains, but percolates

* 1 Sam. xxiv. 1, 2.

through the sands which interpose between it and the Mediterranean *.

It has been immortalized in the song of Deborah and Barak : “ The kings came and fought ; then fought the kings of Canaan in Tanach by the waters of Megiddo ; they took no gain of money. They fought from heaven ; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera.” † The confederate kings took no gain for money ; they were volunteers in the war, stimulated only by hatred and revenge. But they strove in vain ; the hosts of heaven fought for Israel ; the stars in their courses, against the powerful bands of Jabin. By the malignant influences of the heavenly bodies, by the storms of hail, thunder, and rain, produced, it is probable, by the power, and directed by the sagacity of holy angels, the confident hopes of Sisera were blasted, and a mark of eternal infamy stamped upon his name. From heaven, says the Chaldee Paraphrast, from heaven, the place where the stars go forth, war was commenced against Sisera ; the God of heaven shot forth his arrows, and discomfited the hostile armies ; and the river of Kishon swelled over all its banks by the furious tempests, engaged also in the warfare, by the command of its sovereign Lord, and swept the fugitives away. For this stroke of vengeance, the Kishon, was ordained of old : and this is the reason the inspired bard applies to it the distinguishing epithet in the text : “ The river of Kishon swept them away ; that *ancient* river, the river Kishon.” O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength.

But the largest and most celebrated stream in Palestine, is the Jordan. This river has been commonly said to issue from two fountains, or to be formed by the junction of two rivulets, the Jor and the Dan ; but the assertion seems to be totally destitute of any solid foundation. The Jewish historian, Josephus, on the contrary, places its source at Phiala, a fountain which rises about fifteen miles from Cesaria Philippi, a little on the right hand, and not much out of

* Maundrell.

† Judges v. 19, 20.

the way to Trachonitis. It is called Phiala, or the Vial, from its round figure; its water is always of the same depth, the bason being brimful, without either shrinking or overflowing. From Phiala to Panion, which was long considered as the real source of Jordan, the river flows under ground. The secret of its subterraneous course was first discovered by Philip, the tetrarch of Trachonitis, who cast straws into the fountain of Phiala, which came out again at Panion. Leaving the cave of Panion, it crosses the bogs and fens of the lake Semichonitis; and after a course of fifteen miles, passes under the city of Julias, the ancient Bethsaida; then expands into a beautiful sheet of water, named the lake of Gennesareth; and after flowing a long way through the desert, empties itself into the lake Asphaltites, or Dead sea. As the cave Panion lies at the foot of mount Lebanon, in the northern extremity of Canaan, and the lake Asphaltites extends to the southern extremity, the river Jordan pursues its course through the whole extent of the country from north to south. It is evident, also, from the history of Josephus, that a wilderness or desert of considerable extent, stretched along the river Jordan in the times of the New Testament; which was undoubtedly the wilderness mentioned by the evangelists, where John the Baptist came preaching and baptizing.

The Jordan has a considerable depth of water. Chateaubriand makes it six or seven feet deep close at the shore, and about fifty paces in breadth a considerable distance from its entrance into the Dead sea. According to the computation of Volney, it is hardly sixty paces wide at the mouth. It may be said to have two banks, of which the inner marks the ordinary height of the stream; and the outer, its ancient elevation during the rainy season, or the melting of the snows on the summits of Lebanon. In the days of Joshua, and, it is probable, for many ages after his time, the harvest was one of the seasons when the Jordan overflowed his banks. This fact is distinctly recorded by the sacred historian: "And as they that bare the

ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest) *." This happens in the first month of the Jewish year, which corresponds with March †. But in modern times (whether the rapidity of the current has worn the channel deeper than formerly, or whether its waters have taken some other direction), the river seems to have forgotten his ancient greatness. When Maundrell visited Jordan on the thirtieth of March, the proper time for these inundations, he could discern no sign or probability of such overflowing ‡; nay, so far was it from overflowing, that it ran, says our author, at least two yards below the brink of its channel. After having descended the outer bank, he went about a furlong upon the level strand, before he came to the immediate bank of the river. This inner bank was so thickly covered with bushes and trees, among which he observed the tamarisk, the willow, and the oleander, that he could see no water till he had made his way through them. In this entangled thicket, so conveniently planted near the cooling stream, and remote from the habitations of men, several kinds of wild beasts were accustomed to repose till the swelling of the river drove them from their retreats. This circumstance gave occasion to that beautiful allusion of the prophet: "He shall come up like a lion, from the swelling of Jordan, against the habitation of the strong§." The figure is highly poetical and striking. It is not easy to present a more terrible image to the mind, than a lion roused from his den by the roar of the swelling river, and chafed and irritated by its rapid and successive encroachments on his chosen haunts, till forced to quit his last retreat, he ascends to the higher grounds and the open country, and turns the fierceness of his rage against the helpless sheep-cots, or the unsuspecting villages. A destroyer equally fierce, and cruel, and irresistible, the devoted Edomites were to find in Nebuchadnezzar and his armies.

* Joshua iii. 15. † 1 Chron. xii. 15. ‡ Maundrell's Trav. § Jer. xlix. 19.

The water of the river, at the time of Mr Maundrell's visit, was very turbid, and too rapid to allow a swimmer to stem its course. Its breadth might be about twenty yards; and in depth, it far exceeded his height. The rapidity and depth of the river, which are admitted by every traveller, although the volume of water seems now to be much diminished, illustrate those parts of Scripture, which mention the fords and passages of Jordan. Although it no longer rolls down into the Salt sea, so majestic a stream as in the days of Joshua, its ordinary depth is still about ten or twelve feet, so that it cannot even yet be passed but at certain places. Of this well-known circumstance, the men of Gilead took advantage in the civil war, which they were compelled to wage with their brethren: "The Gileadites took the passages of Jordan before the Ephraimites: --- then they took him, and slew him at the passages of Jordan*." The people of Israel, under the command of Ehud, availed themselves of the same advantage in the war with Moab: "And they went down after him, and took the fords of Jordan towards Moab, and suffered not a man to pass over†."

But although the state of this river in modern times, completely justifies the incidental remarks of the sacred writers, it is evident, that Maundrell was disconcerted by the shallowness of the stream, at the time of the year when he expected to see it overflowing all its banks; and his embarrassment seems to have increased, when he contemplated the double margin within which it flowed. This difficulty, which has perhaps occurred to some others, may be explained by a remark which Dr Pococke has made upon the river Euphrates. "The bed of the Euphrates," says that writer, "was measured by some English gentlemen at Beer, and found to be six hundred and thirty yards broad; but the river, only two hundred and fourteen yards over; that they thought it to be nine or ten feet deep in the middle; and were informed, that it sometimes rises twelve feet perpendicularly. He observed, that it had an inner

* Jud. xii. 6.

† Jud. iii. 28.

and outer bank ; but says, it rarely overflows the inner bank : that when it does, they sow water melons and other fruits of that kind, as soon as the water retires, and have a great produce." From this passage, Mr Harmer argues ; " Might not the overflowings of the Jordan be like those of the Euphrates, not annual, but much more rare ?" The difficulty, therefore, will be completely removed, by supposing, that it does not, like the Nile, overflow every year, as some authors by mistake had supposed, but like the Euphrates, only in some particular years ; but when it does, it is in the time of harvest. If it did not in ancient times annually overflow its banks, the majesty of God in dividing its waters, to make way for Joshua and the armies of Israel, was certainly the more striking to the Canaanites ; who, when they looked upon themselves as defended in an extraordinary manner by the casual swelling of the river, its breadth and rapidity being both so extremely increased, yet, found it in these circumstances part asunder, and leave a way on dry land for the people of Jehovah.

The casual overflowing of the river, in Mr Harmer's opinion, seems to receive some confirmation from a passage in Josephus, where that writer informs his readers, that the Jordan was sometimes swelled in the spring, so as to be impassable in places where people were wont to go over in his time ; for, speaking of a transaction on the fourth of the month Dystus, which answers to our March, or, as others reckon, to February, he gives an account of great numbers of people who perished in this river, into which they were driven by their enemies ; which, by the circumstances, appears to have happened in a few days after what was done on the fourth of Dystus*.

But the solution offered by this respectable author is rather strained and unsatisfactory. The inspired writer of the book of Joshua uses language on that subject, which naturally suggests the idea of periodical inundations : " Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest." The present time cer-

* Harmer, vol. 3. p 388.

tainly indicates the general habit of the subject to which it refers, and in this case, what commonly happens to the river. It may be swelled in the spring occasionally ; but it is not easy to discover a reason for the general remark of the sacred writer, if the inundations in the time of harvest were not annual. The causes of these inundations, the melting of the snows on the top of Lebanon, and the former and latter rain, uniformly take place at their appointed seasons ; but a steady periodical cause will certainly produce a corresponding effect. But if this reasoning be just, why did not Maundrell see the effect when he visited the river at the appointed time ? This question may be answered by another, Why do the inundations even of the Nile sometimes fail ? The reason is obvious ; the rains in Abyssinia are not every season equally copious. In the same manner, if the snows on Lebanon, and the periodical rains, are less abundant in some seasons, it will easily account for the state of the river when it was visited by Maundrell. Admitting the fact, that the volume of water in the Jordan is diminished, and that he never overflows his banks as in ancient times, that intelligent traveller himself has sufficiently accounted for the circumstance : some of the waters may be drained off by secret channels, which is not uncommon in those parts of the world ; and if the rapidity of the current be so great that he could not swim against it, the depth of the channel must be greatly increased since the days of Joshua and the Judges. To these, some other causes of considerable power may be added ; the present state of Lebanon, now for a long time deprived of its immense forests of cedar, which formerly exerted a powerful attraction on the humidity of the atmosphere, and served to accumulate the snows on the Sannin, while they screened from the burning rays of the sun, the fountains and rills that fed the Jordan and his tributary streams ; and the great extent to which the declivities of that noble mountain have been subjected to the arts of cultivation, by the Maronites, and other nations, who have taken refuge in its sequestered retreats from the intoler-

able oppression of the Turks, by which its numerous streams have been still further diminished,—must, it is imagined, produce a very sensible difference in the volume of water which that river, once so celebrated for its full and majestic tide, now pours into the Salt sea.

But although these causes must have produced a considerable diminution in the swellings of Jordan, we have the authority of a recent traveller for asserting, that they still take place at the appointed season, and exhibit a scene of no inconsiderable grandeur. In winter, the river overflows its narrow channel, which between the two principal lakes is not more than sixty or eighty feet broad, and swelled by the rains, forms a sheet of water sometimes a quarter of a league in breadth. The time of its overflowing is generally in March, when the snows melt on the mountain of the Shaik; at which time, more than any other, its waters are troubled and of a yellow hue, and its course impetuous*.

The common receptacle into which the Jordan empties his waters, is the lake Asphaltites, from whence they are continually drained off by evaporation. Some writers, unable to find a discharge for the large body of water which is continually rushing into the lake, have been inclined to suspect, it had some communication with the Mediterranean; but, besides that we know of no such gulf, it has been demonstrated by accurate calculations, that evaporation is more than sufficient to carry off the waters of the river. It is in fact very considerable, and frequently becomes sensible to the eye, by the fogs with which the lake is covered at the rising of the sun, and which are afterwards dispersed by the heat†.

How large the common receptacle of the Jordan was, before the destruction of Sodom, cannot now be determined with certainty; but it was much smaller than at present: the whole vale of Siddim, which, before that awful catastrophe, was crowded with cities, or covered with rich and extensive pas-

* Volney's Trav.

† Ibid.

tures, and fields of corn, being now buried in the waters of the lake. The course of the stream, which is to the southward, seems clearly to indicate, that the original basin was in the southern part of the present sea. But, although the waters of the river at first presented a much less extended surface to the action of the sun and the atmosphere, still a secret communication between the lake and the Mediterranean, is not perhaps necessary to account for their discharge. By the admission of Volney, evaporation is *more* than sufficient to carry them off at present; and if to this be added, the great quantity of water consumed in the cities, and required by the cultivator, to refresh his plantations and corn fields, under the burning rays of an oriental sun, it is presumed, a cause equal to the effect is provided. This is not a mere conjecture, unsupported by historical facts; for only a very small portion of the Barrady, the principal river of Damascus, escapes from the gardens that environ the city, through which, it is conducted in a thousand clear and winding streams, to maintain their freshness and verdure*.

Intimately connected in sacred story with the Jordan, are Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus. The only river, which in modern times, waters that ancient capital of Syria, is called the Barrady. It is not twenty yards over; but rushes down from the mountains with great rapidity, and with so large a body of water, that it abundantly supplies the thirsty fields and gardens around, and the innumerable baths and fountains within the city.

The city itself, is of a long straight figure, extending about two miles, and lying nearly in the direction of north-east and south-west. It is surrounded with gardens, stretching no less, according to common estimation, than thirty miles around; which gives it the appearance of a city in the midst of a vast wood. The gardens are thickly planted with fruit trees of all kinds, that are kept fresh and verdant by the waters of the

* Maundrell's Trav.

Barrady. Numerous turrets and gilded steeples, glittering in the blazing sun-beam among the green boughs, diversifies and heightens the beauty of the prospect. On the north side of this vast wood, is a place called Solkas, crowded with the most beautiful summer-houses and gardens. This delightful scene, and even the city itself, may be considered as the creation of the Barrady, which supplies both the gardens and the city, diffusing beauty and fertility wherever it flows.

The river, as soon as it issues from the disparted mountain into the plain, is divided into three streams, of which the one in the middle, which is the largest of the three, runs directly to Damascus through a large open field, called the Ager Damascenus, and is distributed to all the cisterns and fountains in the city. The other two, which Maundrell takes to be the work of art, are drawn round; one to the right hand, and the other to the left, on the borders of the gardens, into which they are introduced by little currents, and conducted to every part of the wood. The distribution is so complete, that not a garden but has a fine quick stream running through it, which both waters the thirsty soil, and supplies a number of artificial fountains and other water works, adding greatly to the beauty and convenience of the retreat. But the consequence of the distribution is fatal to the river, which is almost wholly drunk up by the city and gardens. The small part of it which escapes, is united again into one channel on the south-east side of the city; and after a course of about three or four hours, finally loses itself in a morass, without reaching the sea.

The Greeks, and from them the Romans, give to this river the name of Chysorrhoeas; but as for Abana and Pharpar of Damascus, mentioned by the sacred writer, not even the names are preserved. They must therefore have been only two branches of the Barrady; and one of them was probably the same stream that runs through the Ager Damascenus directly to the city, which seems by its serpentine course, to be a natural channel. The other, it is now difficult to find; but

this will be no matter of surprise, when it is considered how often the Damascenes have altered the course of this river, to suit their own convenience and pleasure.

The numerous and important advantages, which the winding streams of the Barrady confer on the city of Damascus and its adjacent fields, sufficiently account for the indignant reply of Naaman the Syrian, to the prophet; “Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean? So he turned, and went away in a rage.” The haughty Syrian, piqued that the prophet treated him with so little ceremony, considered the command to go and wash in Jordan seven times, as a species of insult offered to his native land; he did not know, or would not consider, that the word of Jehovah imparts efficacy to the most unpromising means.

CHAP. IX.

OF THE STATE OF THE WEATHER IN PALESTINE AND THE EAST.

THE land of Canaan, from the mountainous nature of the country, and its diversified exposure, seems to experience a great variety of temperature. From Tripoli to Sidon, the country is much colder than the rest of the coast farther to the north and to the south, and has a less regular change of seasons. The same remark applies to the mountainous parts of Judea, where the vegetable productions are much later than on the sea coast, or in the neighbourhood of Gaza. The air of Saphet, in Galilee, is, from its elevated situation, so fresh and cool, that the heats which, during the summer, are very great in the adjacent country, are hardly felt*. Josephus takes notice of the same differences of climate in his time; stating, that

* Shaw's Travels.

it was warm near Jericho, while it snowed in other parts of Judea. Egmont and Hayman found the heat in the plain of Jericho extremely troublesome, and for some hours in the day quite insupportable. So early as the month of March, the heat actually proved fatal to several persons in the plain of Jericho, the year before these travellers arrived. In the great battle which Baldwin IV. king of Jerusalem, fought with the Saracens, not far from Tiberias in Galilee, a situation considerably more to the north than Jericho, many of his troops died by the heat. The archbishop of Tyre, who writes the narrative, asserts, that the heat at that time, which appears to have been the middle of summer, was so great, that as many died by the heat in both armies as by the sword. After the battle, in their return to their former encampment, an ecclesiastic of some distinction in Baldwin's army, unable to bear the vehement beams of the sun, was carried in a litter, yet he expired under mount Tabor, near the river Kishon. Reland, in his *Palestina*, shews that Shunem was in the vicinity of Tabor; and at Shunem, as we learn from the sacred historian, the heat proved fatal to a child in the days of the prophet Elisha, in the time of harvest*. How desirable then, how necessary to the comfort, and even to the very existence of life in those scorched regions, must be "a covert from the heat, or the shadow of a great rock†?" It is not without a strict regard to natural phenomena, that the spirit of inspiration directs the spouse to exclaim, "I sat down under his shadow with great delight‡." Beautiful and striking as these figures are, they give us but a faint idea of that protection and comfort which the true believer derives from the favour of his Redeemer. When the storms of life beat keen and heavy upon his head; when the fires of persecution kindle and blaze around him; when Satan desires to have him, that he may sift him as wheat, and an accusing conscience fills his bosom with dismay,

* Harmer's Observations, Dr Clarke's edition.

† Isai, xxxii. 2.

‡ Song ii. 3.

—he seeks and finds repose in the atoning blood of his Saviour, in the efficacy of his intercession, and in the power of his omnipotent arm. The spreading tree may wither, and the stupendous rock may be tumbled from its base, and the weary traveller may find shelter under them no more; but the mercy of the Lord endures for ever, and he is in every age, and in every place, a present help in the time of trouble.

The fields of Canaan are refreshed with frequent and copious rains, while some of the neighbouring countries are scarcely ever moistened with a shower. In the winter months, the rain falls indiscriminately, but seldom in the summer. Soon after the heats commence, the grass withers, the flower fades, every green thing is dried up by the roots, and the fields, so lately clothed with the richest verdure, and adorned with the loveliest flowers, are converted into a brown and arid wilderness. To the uniform withered appearance of the fields during the reign of an eastern summer, and not to any particular year of drought, the psalmist refers in these plaintive terms: “My moisture is turned into the drought of summer*.” When conviction slept, and conscience was silent, the soul of David resembled a field refreshed by the genial showers of heaven; but the moment God in anger entered into judgment with him, and set his sins in order before his face, his courage failed, his beauty was turned into corruption, and his strength into weakness; “the commandment came, sin revived, and he died.”

Though the summer in Syria is commonly dry, the heavens are sometimes overcast, and a smart thunder shower suddenly rushes down to refresh the parched soil†. One of these fell at Aleppo in the night between the first and second of July, 1743; but it was regarded as a very uncommon occurrence at that season. It is probably still more extraordinary at Jerusalem; for Jerome, who lived long in Palestine, denies, in his commentary on Amos, that he had ever seen rain in those

* Psal. xxxiii. 4.

† Russel's Hist. of Aleppo.

provinces, and especially in Judea, in the end of June, or in the month of July. It may, however, occasionally fall, though Jerome had never seen it, as it did at Aleppo, while Dr Russel resided in that city. But such an occurrence, by no means invalidates the proof which the prophet Samuel gave of his divine mission, when he called for thunder and rain from heaven in the time of wheat harvest*; since a very rare and unusual event immediately happening without any preceding appearance of it, upon the prediction of a person professing himself to be a prophet of the Lord, and giving it as an attestation of his sustaining that character, is a sufficient proof that his affirmation is true, although a similar event has sometimes happened without any such declared interposition of God, and therefore universally understood to be casual and without design. Nor should it be forgotten, that this thunder storm in the book of Samuel, seems to have happened in the day time, while the people of Israel were celebrating the accession of Saul to the throne; a circumstance which, from its singularity, added considerable energy to this event, and, perhaps, was to them a sufficient proof of the miraculous interference of Jehovah. Dr Russel informs us, that the rains in those countries usually fall in the night, as did those extraordinary thunder storms already mentioned, which happened in the month of July.

The rainy season is limited to the autumnal and winter months; for although some showers occasionally fall in the time of harvest, it is reckoned a very uncommon occurrence. In this light Harmer thinks it was viewed by Solomon: "As snow in summer, and as rain in harvest, so honour is not seemly for a fool†." But the wise man seems rather to have had his eye on the injurious effects of rain in that season of the year. As rain in harvest interrupts the labours of the reaper, and injures the fruits of the earth, so vicious and unprincipled men, when they happen to be crowned with honour, and ele-

* 1 Sam. xii. 16.

† Prov. xxvi. 1.

vated to places of power and trust, uniformly prove a nuisance to society; instead of being a "terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well," they encourage the wicked, and depress the good and the virtuous.

Nor does that affecting historical incident, recorded in the second book of Samuel, refer to the ordinary state of the weather in the time of harvest, but to an unusual drought and scarcity, that God, in his just displeasure, sent upon the land of Israel, on account of Saul and his bloody house; which were not removed till seven of his sons were hanged up by the Gibeonites before the Lord: "then Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah, took sackcloth, and spread it for her upon the rock, from the beginning of harvest, until water dropped upon them out of heaven, and suffered neither the birds of the air to rest upon them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night*."

But although these texts, when viewed in their connection, do not seem to contain any allusion to the general character of the harvest months, no doubt ought to be entertained of the fact stated in the beginning of the section. The time of harvest was generally dry, a circumstance favourable to the labours of the husbandman, on whose success depended the subsistence of the poor and the needy. But the winter months were often extremely cold and rainy; thus Ezra describes the ninth month, which answers to our January, "as a time of much rain," so heavy and incessant, that the people could not stand without to hear the law read, and to rectify the disorders that had crept into the congregation†.

When Dr Shaw was at Tozer, in December 1727, they had a small drizzling shower, which continued two hours; and so little precaution was taken against accidents of this kind, that several of the houses, which, as usual in that country, are built only with palm branches, mud and tiles baked in the sun, corresponding perhaps to the untempered mortar of Ezekiel‡, and explanatory of its nature, fell down by imbibing the mois-

* 2 Sam. xxi. 10.

† Ezra x. 9, 13.

‡ Ezek. xiii. 11.

ture of the shower. Nay, the Doctor firmly believed, if the drops had been either larger, or the shower of a longer continuance, or in the language of the prophet, “overflowing,” the whole city would have dissolved and dropt to pieces.

The time of the first rains is differently stated by modern travellers. According to Dr Shaw, the first autumnal rains usually fall about the eleventh of November: from a manuscript journal of travels in those countries, Mr Harmer found that the rain fell in the Holy land, on the second of November; and he was assured by the historian of the revolt of Ali Bey, who lived some years in Palestine, that the rains begin to fall there about the eighteenth day of September; at first they descend in slight showers, but as the season advances, they become very copious and heavy, though never continual*.

Dr Shaw seems to suppose, that the Arabs of Barbary do not begin to break up their grounds, till the first rains of autumn fall; while the author of the history of Ali Bey's revolt, supposes that they sometimes plow their land before the descent of the rain, because the soil is then light, and easily worked. This statement contains nothing incredible; grain will remain long in the earth unhurt, and vegetate as soon as the descending showers communicate sufficient moisture. The oriental husbandman may cultivate his field, as is often done in other countries, in expectation of rain; a circumstance to which Solomon seems to refer: “He that observeth the wind shall not sow, and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap †.” If they never sowed in the east but when the soil was moistened with rain, they could have no reason to observe, whether the wind threatened rain or promised fair weather; but if the seed was cast into the ground previous to the descent of the rain, they might naturally enough be induced to wait till they observed the signs of its approach.

The rainy season in the beginning of winter, by the concurring testimony of travellers, is commonly introduced by a gale

* Harmer, vol. 1.

† Eccl. xi. 4.

of wind from the north-east. In Syria, the winds are variable in November, and the two succeeding months; seldom strong, but more inclined to the north and east, than any of the other quarters. They continue to blow nearly in the same direction, till about the end of February, when they begin to blow hard westerly. The weather in April is in general fair and clear; seldom dark or cloudy, except when it rains, which it does in hard thunder showers, as in the last month, but not so often. When light northerly or easterly breezes happen to blow, they have commonly a few close hazy days; but the westerly winds are generally fresh.

In the rainy season, the wind alters and begins to blow from the west in February, and continues in the same point till May; after which, seldom any more rain falls in Syria till autumn, when the wind blows commonly from the north-east*. These remarks will throw light on that part of our Lord's address to the Jews, in which he adverts to the state of the weather: "When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, there cometh a shower, and so it is†." This declaration our Lord seems to have made to the people in spring; for his words entirely correspond with the state of the weather in that season; but not in the close of autumn, and the beginning of winter. The lilies then, which are mentioned in the same chapter, might be growing at that very time, before the eyes of his auditors: "Consider the lilies how they grow, they toil not, they spin not, and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothe the grass, which is to-day in the field, and to-morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith‡."

A very small cloud is often the forerunner of a violent storm or hurricane. The cloud like a man's hand, which the servant of Elijah saw rising over the sea, is, for want of due observation, commonly regarded as an unmeaning circumstance

* Russel's Hist. of Aleppo.

† Luke xii. 54.

‡ Luke xii. 27.

in the prophetic history. Intelligent travellers know that it is a prognostic of rain. The first indication of the tornado or the hurricane, is a dark spot on the edge of the horizon. This gradually increases, till the whole heavens are robed in black, and a most tremendous uproar of the elements ensues. When its fury is spent, and all is comparatively clear, the reappearance of the little cloud is the undoubted evidence, as it is the forerunner of another tempest.

The winter in Canaan is extremely wet and cold. In the time of the crusades, many of the troops perished through want of provisions, intenseness of the cold, and the heaviness of the winter rains. Fulcherius, who was in the retinue of the prince of Antioch, in his journey to Jerusalem, and saw many of both sexes die, besides numbers of their cattle, says, they were kept wet for four or five days together, by the continual rains. So great is the quantity of rain which occasionally falls, and so intense the cold, that the elements seem to conspire the ruin of every living creature that is exposed to their fury. It is agreed by all those who have written on the subject, that all the winter months in Palestine are rainy; and by consequence, that Judea is not one of those regions where it only rains at the equinoxes.

The Hebrew word *Horeph*, accordingly, which we translate winter, in Mr Harmer's opinion, seems rather to mean precisely the wet season. "O that I were as in months past," says Job, "as in the days when God preserved me, as I was in the days of my winter!" In the days of his moist time, when, as he expresses it, "my root was spread out by the waters, and the dew lay all night upon my branch: my glory was fresh in me*." Not in the days of his disgrace then, the days in which he was stripped of his ornaments, as an herb of its leaves and flowers in the winter; but like a plant, in the latter part of the rainy season, before the violent heats come on, which scorch and burn up every green thing†.

* Job xxix. 2—19. 20.

† Harm. vol. I. p. 38.

But the term Horeph, from the verb haraph, to strip, literally means the stripping season ; and signifies that part of the year which strips vegetables of their flowers, fruit, and leaves, and consequently, the earth of its beauty. It is opposed to Kaitz, from koutz, to awake or quicken, the quickening or awakening season, and includes both autumn and winter. Is it probable, that the cold and rainy season of winter, would be an object of desire to Job, when “ the heavens are filled with clouds, when the earth swims in rain, and all nature wears a lowering countenance ? ” It is more natural to render the phrase, in the days of his autumn, which in those climates is a delightful season ; for then the heats are abated, the earth is moistened with dew, or refreshed with the first showers of the latter rain, and the various fruits of the earth, to use the beautiful language of inspiration, are ready to drop into the mouth of the eater ; or, the trees and fields being stripped of their produce, are heaped upon his board. The afflicted patriarch certainly referred to the end of harvest, in allusion to which he might say, with strict propriety, “ my root was spread out by the waters, and the dew lay all night upon my branches ; my glory was fresh in me.”

The frost is sometimes so very severe about Jerusalem, and even in some of the lower parts of Judea, that the ground in winter is covered with snow, which occasionally falls in very great quantities, and is attended with a most piercing cold. The hapless traveller is then reduced to very great distress. The ground is alternately deluged with rain, or encrusted with ice, or loaded with snow ; his beasts of burden are swept away by the sudden torrents which descend from the mountains, or swallowed up in the treacherous morass. Storms of hail beat around him with incredible violence, and the winds blow with so much vehemence, that the stakes of his tent are torn up and carried to a distance ; his cattle which escape the quagmire, often die through fatigue, cold, and wet ; his provisions are

spoiled, his arms are covered with rust, his clothes are damaged, and his life exposed to the most imminent hazard*.

Such extreme colds, however, are not experienced unless particular winds prevail; even at Christmas when the air is calm, travellers inform us, it is pleasant to sit with open windows. But when the sky is agitated by those tempestuous winds, known to sailors by the name of *Levanter*s, the cold is so piercing, the conflict of hail, of ice, of snow, and of rain is so terrible, that many of the poor people and their cattle perish. We are apt to wonder that an eastern writer, in a hymn composed for the use of ancient Israel, should celebrate the praise of Jehovah in these terms: "He giveth his snow like wool, he scatters the hoar frost like ashes, he casteth forth his ice like morsels: who can stand before his cold†?" But the preceding statements will prove, that the royal Psalmist did not mean to describe the rigours of a northern, but an oriental winter, and that he copied accurately from nature.

If the snows which fall in Judea, resemble those which travellers have seen in other parts of the east, the sacred writer displays in that noble poem, an energy and correctness of which we are not commonly aware. We learn from Chardin, in a manuscript note on this passage of the Psalmist, that towards the Black sea in Iberia and Armenia, and therefore he imagines in other countries also, "the snow falls in flakes as big as walnuts; but not being either hard or very compact, it does no other harm than presently to cover and overwhelm the traveller." The sacred writer had probably seen flakes of equal size on the mountains of Judea; but whether he had or not, that Divine Spirit, under whose unerring influence he wrote, who lays up the snow in his treasures, knew that they existed, and marked the spot where they fell. He apprised his servant of the fact, and suggested the beautiful and strikingly correct figure to his mind, "He giveth his snow like wool."

The description that Jerome gives of the Holy land, in his

* Harm. vol. 1. p. 40, &c.

† Psal. cxlvii. 16, 17.

letter to Marcella, may seem hardly consistent with the picture which the Psalmist draws of a Syrian winter: "If it is summer, the shade of the trees will afford a place of retirement; if autumn, the leaves under the trees, united with the temperature of the air, will point to a place where you may enjoy yourself in quiet. In the spring the ground is painted with flowers; and the singing of psalms will be more sweet when joined with the music of birds. If it be the time of wintry cold and snow, I will buy no wood, and yet be warmer than you are at Rome, whether sleeping or awake; at least, I am sure I shall guard myself from cold with less fuel.

This Christian father lived long in Palestine, and therefore seems every way entitled to credit. But a very little attention will convince the candid inquirer, that the difference between the Psalmist and Jerome is only apparent; for in this very passage the latter admits, that in winter the weather is cold, and the ground is covered with snow; he only asserts, that in general the winter is milder in Palestine than at Rome. Nor ought it to be forgotten, that his letter was written for a special purpose—to prevail upon his friend to leave Rome and settle at Jerusalem. But it is well known how difficult it is in such circumstances, to prevent imagination from touching the picture with her vivid pencil, and imparting a richness of colouring which sober judgment will scarcely approve. That Jerome did not sufficiently guard against her magic power on this occasion, we have reason to suspect, from a passage in his commentary on the charge of our Lord to his disciples, "Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter;" where he distinctly admits, that the cold in Palestine is frequently too severe to be suffered by those who fled before their enemies, and might be glad to conceal themselves in the deserts, which the extreme severity of the cold would not allow.

But admitting that the glowing description of Jerome is actually copied from nature, still no real difference between him and the inspired writer exists; for we learn from other

sources of information, that in the depth of winter it is frequently warm, nay, almost hot in the open air; and by consequence, from the fall of the leaf in November, and the coming on of the winter storms about the twelfth of December, a recluse may enjoy himself very comfortably in his meditations abroad. It is evidently to this part of the season that Jerome refers. But on the other hand, it is often piercingly cold, even to those that are lately come from a cold climate*.

In those frequent intervals of returning warmth, which relieve the severity of an oriental winter, the people of the east enjoy the conversation of their friends; the poorer class in the open air sauntering about, and sitting under the walls of their houses; people of rank and fashion in the porches or gateways, where the master of a family receives visits, and transacts business, few persons, not even the nearest relations, being admitted into their apartments except upon extraordinary occasions†.

To these circumstances the prophet Ezekiel seems to refer in the following passage: "Also thou son of man, the children of thy people are still talking against (or rather concerning) thee by the walls, and in the doors of the houses, and speak one to another, every one to his brother, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from the Lord‡." Our translators render the original words Beha, against thee; the Septuagint, *περι σο*, of or concerning thee. This is the more singular, as the same particle is rendered in other parts of Scripture, Of or concerning: thus, in the eighty-seventh Psalm, "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of the Lord." The following words incontestibly prove they were not speaking against Ezekiel, but in his favour: "And they come unto thee as the people cometh: and they sit before thee as my people; and they hear thy words, but they will not do them; for with their mouth they shew much love; but their heart goeth after their covetousness." But if *their*

* Russel's Hist.

† Shaw's Trav.

‡ Ezek, xxxiii. 30.

mouth shewed much love, they did not speak against the prophet, but in his commendation. These conversations respecting the prophet were held in winter; for it was the tenth month, answering to the latter end of December, or beginning of January, when the orientals sit under the walls for the benefit of the sun, or in the porches or gateways of their houses*.

As the Copts in Egypt commonly spend their holy days in conversation under the walls of their habitation, so Mr Harmer is of opinion, that these words of Ezekiel may refer to such times. And if so, he asks, will they not shew that the Israelites observed their sabbaths in the captivity? And that so early as the time of the first destruction of Jerusalem, they used to assemble on those days, to hear if the prophets had received any messages from the Lord in that week, and to receive those advices which their calamitous circumstances made peculiarly seasonable? It is very probable, that the Jews in those early times assembled to hear the instructions of the prophets, and for the public worship of their God, so far as their painful circumstances might permit; but the words of Ezekiel under consideration, appear to be of a more general character, referring as well to the public meetings of the synagogue, as to the private parties and conversations of the people.

The orientals distinguish their winter into two parts, or rather the depth of winter from the commencement and termination of the season, by the severity of the cold. This which lasts about forty days, they call Murbania. To this rigorous part of the season, the wise man seems to refer in that beautiful passage of the Song: "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land†." If we explain this text by the natural phenomena, these words, "the rain is over and gone," cannot be considered as an exposition of the preceding clause, "for, lo, the

* Pococke's Trav.

† Song ii. 10.

winter is past;" and as denoting, that the moist part of the year was entirely gone, along with which, Dr Russel assures us, all rural delights abandon the plains of Syria: but the meaning is, that the Murbania, the depth of winter, is past and over, and the weather become agreeably warm; the rain has just ceased, and consequently, has left the sure and agreeable prospect of undisturbed and pleasant serenity for several days. It had been no inducement to the spouse, to quit her apartments with the view of enjoying the pleasures of the country, to be told, that the rainy season had completely terminated, and the intense heats of summer, under which, almost every plant and flower sickens and fades away, had commenced. This view of the text corresponds with the state of matters in the religious world, and with the experience of every Christian. The storms of life do not always blow with equal violence: the privations and the sorrows of the believer, are not equally numerous and severe at all times; often the storm at the command of his heavenly Father, is changed into a calm; but the season of tranquillity is commonly of short duration, and is but comparatively bright and serene.

The inhabitants of the great towns of Syria, during the pleasant weather in winter, frequently leave their homes, and give entertainments to their friends under tents, pitched in the country for that purpose. In April, and part of May, they retire to the gardens; and in the heat of summer, receive their guests in the summer-houses, or under the shade of the trees*. The same custom seems, from the invitation of the Bridegroom, to have prevailed in the land of Canaan in the time of Solomon. The inhabitants of Aleppo, make their excursions very early in the season; and the cold weather is not supposed by Solomon to have ceased long before, since it is distinctly mentioned. In Syria, the narcissus flowers during the whole of the Murbania; hyacinths and violets, at latest, before it is quite over. Therefore, when Solomon says, the flowers appear on

* Russel's Hist.

the earth, he does not mean the time when the earliest flowers disclose their bloom, but when the verdant turf is thickly studded with all the rich, the gay, and the diversified profusion of an oriental spring. This delightful season is ushered in at Aleppo, about the middle of February, by the appearance of a small cranes-bill on the bank of the river, which meanders through its extensive gardens; and a few days after, so rapid is the progress of vegetation, all the beauty of spring is displayed: about the same time, the birds renew their songs. When Thevenot visited Jordan on the sixteenth of April, he found the little woods on the margin of the river, filled with nightingales in full chorus. This is rather earlier than at Aleppo, where they do not appear till nearly the end of the month. These facts illustrate the strict propriety of Solomon's description, every circumstance of which is accurately copied from nature.

In Palestine, and the surrounding regions, the coldness of the night in all the seasons of the year, is often very inconvenient. The king of Judah is described by the prophet, as sitting in his winter-house in the ninth month, corresponding to the latter end of November and part of December, with a fire burning on the hearth before him*. This answers to the state of the weather at Aleppo, where, as Russel informs us, the most delicate people make no fires till the end of November. The Europeans, resident in Syria, he observes in a note, continue them till March; the people of the country, seldom longer than February; but fires are occasionally made in the wet seasons, not only in March, but in April also, and would be acceptable at the gardens, sometimes even in May. Dr Pococke, in his journey to Jerusalem, being conducted by an Arab to his tent, found his wife and family warming themselves by the fire on the seventeenth of March; and on the eighth of May, he was treated with a fire to warm him, by the governor of Galilee. The nights in that season are often very cold; and

* Jer, xxxvi. 22.

of this, the inhabitants are rendered more sensible by the heats of the day. In May and June, and even in July, travellers very often put on fires in the evening*. This statement clearly discovers the reason, that the people who went to Gethsemane to apprehend our Lord, kindled a fire of coals, to warm themselves at the time of the passover, which happened in the spring.

But it is not only in elevated situations, as that on which the city of Jerusalem stands, that the cold of the night is so piercing; the traveller has to encounter its severity on the low-lying plains, by the sea side, and in the sandy deserts, where, during the day beneath the scorching sun-beam, he could scarcely breathe. The severe cold of the morning, compelled Mr Doubdan to remain some hours at Joppa, in a poor Greek hovel, before he could set out for Rama. At ancient Tyre, his condition was still more distressing. On the sixteenth of May, he found the heat near that once renowned mart of nations so great, that though he and his party took their repast on the grass, under a large tree, by the side of a small river, yet he complains, "they were burnt up alive." After attempting in vain to prosecute their voyage, night overtook them at the ruins of Tyre. Near those ruins, they were obliged to pass a considerable part of the night, not without suffering greatly from the cold, which was as violent and sharp, as the heat of the day had been intense. Our traveller acknowledges, that he shook, as in the depth of winter, more than two or three full hours.

In the midst of the burning deserts, where the heat is increased tenfold by the sandy surface on which it beats, the traveller encounters much inconvenience, and even distress from the chilling cold of the night. Mr Bruce, the justly celebrated Abyssinian traveller, lost all his camels in one night by the cold, in the deserts of Senaar. In the year 1779, the Bedouin Arabs plundered an English caravan in the desert, between Suez and Cairo. Seven of the Europeans, stripped entirely

* Russel's Hist.

naked by their inhuman spoilers, in the hope of reaching Cairo, pushed forward into the desert. Fatigue, thirst, hunger, and the heat of the sun, destroyed one after another: one alone, survived all these horrors. During three days and two nights, he wandered in this parched and sandy desert, frozen at night by the north wind, (it being in the month of January), and burnt by the sun during the day, without any other shade but a single bush, into which he thrust his head among the thorns, or any drink but his own urine. At length, on the third day, he was descried by an Arab, who conducted him to his tent, and took care of him for three days, with the utmost humanity. At the expiration of that time, the merchants of Cairo, apprized of his situation, procured him a conveyance to that city, where he arrived in the most deplorable condition*. From these important facts we may conclude, that even in those parched countries, a fire in the night, in the middle of May, might be very requisite, and highly acceptable. The hapless wanderer, whose affecting story Volney records, was frozen at night by the north wind, and burnt by the dreadful heat of the sun during the day; and the patriarch Jacob complains, that he was for many years exposed to similar hardships in the plains of Mesopotamia; “In the day, the drought consumed me, and the frost by night†.” Nothing assuredly was remoter from the design of Volney, a proud and insolent enemy of revelation, than to confirm the truth of Scripture history; his statement clearly proves, that Jacob’s complaint was not hastily made, but strictly agreeable to truth.

In the rainy season, the clouds pour down their treasures at certain intervals with great violence, for three or four days together. Such abundant and violent rains, in a mountainous country like Judea, by washing away the soil, must often be attended with very serious consequences to the dwellings of the inhabitants, which happen to be placed within the reach of the rapid inundations. At Aleppo, the violent rains often wash

* Volney’s Trav.

† Gen. xxxi. 40.

down stone walls; and Dr Russel mentions a remarkable instance of a hamlet with a fig garden, in the Castravan mountains, being suddenly removed by the swelling waters, to a great distance. It was to an event of this kind, which is by no means uncommon in those regions, that our Lord refers: "Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: he is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock; and when the flood arose, the stream beat violently upon that house, and could not shake it; for it was founded upon a rock. But he that heareth and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth, against which the stream beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great*."

The former and the latter rains, is a phrase quite familiar to every reader of the Scriptures. The distinction which it announces is founded in nature, and is of great importance in those parts of the world. At Aleppo, the drought of summer commonly terminates in September, by some heavy showers, which occasionally continue some days; after which, there is an interval of fine weather, of between twenty and thirty days, when the showers return, which are called the second rains. The first rains fall between the twenty-sixth of September, and the sixth of October†: but it is later in Judea; the former rain, according to Dr Shaw, descending in Palestine about the beginning of November. The seasons in the east are exceedingly regular, yet it is not to be supposed, that they admit of no variation; the descent of the first and second rain occasionally varies a whole month. But the first and second rains of Syria, mentioned by Russel, do not seem to correspond with the former and latter rains of the Holy Scriptures. This is the opinion of Jerome, who lived long in Palestine: nor do the natural historians of those countries take any notice of the first and second rains in autumn; but uniformly speak of the former and latter

* Luke vi, 48.

† Russel's Hist.

rains. It is therefore of some importance to inquire, what are the times of the year when these rains descend. Here it may be proper to observe, that rain in the vernal season, is represented by oriental writers as of great advantage. The more wet the spring, the later the harvest, and the more plentiful the crop*. In Barbary, the vernal rains are indispensably requisite to secure the hopes of the husbandman. If the latter rains fall as usual in the middle of April, he reckons his crop secure; but extremely doubtful if they happen to fail†. This accounts well for the great value which Solomon sets upon them: "In the light of the king's countenance is life, and his favour is as a cloud of the latter rain‡." To this may be added, that the words translated the former and latter rains, are not expressive of first and second; and by consequence, do not refer to the rains mentioned by Russel, but mark a distinction of much greater importance. They must therefore be the same as the vernal rains, which are universally allowed to be of the utmost consequence in those regions.

An argument, however, which is commonly adduced in proof, that the latter rain means the showers that fall in the spring, is in reality of no force; it is founded in these words of the prophet Joel: "He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain and the latter rain, in the first month§." The word month is not in the original; which ruins the argument. The Septuagint accordingly render the words, "he will rain upon you the former and the latter rain, as aforetime." Jerome understands the passage in the same sense; though he believed the latter rains were those of the spring||.

The following passage in the prophecies of Amos, has been erroneously referred by some commentators, to the vernal or latter rains: "Also I have withholden the rain from you, when there were yet three months to the harvest; and I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city;

* Russel's Hist.

† Shaw.

‡ Prov. xvi. 15.

§ Joel ii. 28.

|| Harm. vol. 1. p. 76.

one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not, withered. So two or three cities wandered unto one city to drink water, but they were not satisfied, &c*." The latter rain falls in the middle or towards the end of April, from which, if there be three months to the harvest, as the prophet asserts, it must fall in the middle or towards the end of July. But at present in Syria, barley harvest commences about the beginning of May, and that, as well as the wheat harvest, is finished by the twentieth of the same month. In Judea the harvest is still more early†. The rain, therefore, which God threatens to withhold from his people, must have commonly fallen in the first part of February. That a quantity of snow descends at Jerusalem at this time, which is of great importance to the succeeding harvest, is confirmed by the authority of Dr Shaw. It is no real objection to this view, that the prophet threatens to withhold the rain; for the great difference of temperature in Palestine, may be the cause that it snows in the mountainous districts, while it rains in other parts of the same country. By the moderate quantity of rain or snow which falls in the month of February, the reservoirs of water on which the cities of Palestine chiefly depend, are filled, and the prospect of a fruitful and plentiful year is opened. Of so great importance to the subsistence and comfort of that people are these rains, that upon their descent, they make similar rejoicings with the Egyptians upon the cutting of the Nile. The prophet evidently refers to both these circumstances, to the succeeding harvest, in these words: "the piece or field upon which it rained not, withered;" to the state of the cisterns in these: "so two or three cities wandered into one city to drink water, but they were not satisfied." Hence, Mr Harmer, who treats Jerome on this occasion with undue severity, is wrong in supposing, that the inspired writer refers to the single circumstance of filling their cisterns with water. He refers to both, and this Jerome distinctly notices; "God suspended the rain," says that father

* Amos iv. 7, 8.

† Russel, vol. 1. p. 74.

“not only to punish them with want of bread, but also with thirst; for in those countries in which he then resided, excepting a few fountains, they had only cistern water; so that if the divine anger suspended the rains, there was more danger of perishing by thirst than by famine.” Jerome certainly committed a mistake, when he referred the words of Amos to the latter rain; but he understood as certainly the true extent of the threatening.

The former and the latter rains were in the days of Elijah, suspended for three years and six months. But when the prophet said to Ahab, “As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word*,” he could not mean, there shall be no rain at all for three years; for long before their termination, the whole population of Israel must have miserably perished. It is not uncommon among the orientals, to express a great deficiency by an absolute negative. Thus Philo affirms, that in Egypt they have no winter; by which, according to his own explanation, he meant no hail, no thunder, no violent storms of wind, which constitute an eastern winter. Pliny in like manner affirms, there are no rains, no thunders, no earthquakes in that country; while Maillet who quotes him, asserts that he had seen it rain there several times, and that there were two earthquakes in Egypt during his residence. His idea, therefore, is very plausible, that Pliny meant only to state the rare occurrence of these phenomena; that it seldom feels the power of the earthquake, and when it does, suffers but little damage; that it very seldom rains or thunders, although on the sea coast the rains and thunders are often very violent; but it does not rain there as in other parts of the world. This account of the rain of Egypt, is confirmed by the testimony of two English travellers. When Pitts was at Cairo, the rain descended in torrents, and the streets having no kennels to carry off the water, it reached above the ancles, and in some places much

* 1 Kings xvii. 1.

higher. In Upper Egypt it rained and hailed almost a whole morning, when Dr Pococke was there in the month of February; and the following night it also rained very hard. These authentic statements unfold the true meaning of the prophet's assertion, "that Egypt has no rain*;" he must be understood in the same qualified sense as Pliny and other writers. In the same manner, the words of Elijah to Ahab must be interpreted; they only mean, that the dew and the rain should not fall in the usual and necessary quantities. Such a suspension of rain and dew was sufficient to answer the corrective purposes of God, whilst an absolute drought of three years' continuance, must have converted the whole country into an uninhabitable waste. But such a destruction is not intimated in the Scriptures; and we may conclude from the inspired narrative, did not take place. That guilty people were certainly reduced in the righteous judgments of God to great straits: but still they were able to subsist until his fierce anger passed away, and mercy returned to bless their afflicted habitations.

A shower of rain in the east, is often preceded by a whirlwind, which darkens the sky with immense clouds of sand from the loose surface of the desert. To this common phenomenon, the prophet alludes, in his direction to the king of Israel, who was marching with his army against Moab, and was ready to perish in the wilderness for want of water: "Thus saith the Lord, make this valley full of ditches. For thus saith the Lord, ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water that ye may drink, both ye and your cattle and your beasts.†" If a squall had not commonly preceded rain, the prophet would not have said, ye shall not see wind. The intimate relation between a gale of wind and a shower of rain, in the oriental regions, is confirmed by the following proverb: "Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift (or pretends he will bestow a valuable gift, and disappoints the ex-

* Zech. xiv. 18.

† 2 Kings iii. 16, 17.

pectation of his neighbour), is like clouds and winds without rain *.”

The sacred historian, in one passage, speaks of the heavens being darkened with wind†; but as this can be produced only two ways, either by collecting the clouds, or by raising immense quantities of sand into the higher regions of the air, and as the clouds are mentioned in the same clause, he must, it is presumed, allude to the latter phenomenon. The rising of a whirlwind before a shower, and the elevation of the sand, are not confined to the desert, they are common occurrences in the inhabited regions of Syria.

The whirlwind, it appears from the sacred writings, comes from different points of the compass. The prophet Ezekiel speaks of one that came from the north; and although it appeared to him in vision, it was according to the course of nature; for we learn, from other sources of information, that it sometimes arises in that quarter. William of Tyre records an instance of a violent whirlwind from the north, in the time of the crusades, which enveloped two hostile armies in an immense cloud of dust, and compelled them for a while to suspend the work of destruction. When that enterprising traveller, Mr Parke, was traversing the Sahara, or great desert, in his way to the Niger, destitute of provisions and water, his throat pained with thirst, and his strength nearly exhausted, he heard a wind sounding from the east, and instinctively opened his parched mouth to receive the precious drops of rain which he confidently expected, but it was instantly filled with sand drifted from the desert. So immense was the quantity raised into the air, and wafted upon the wings of the wind, and so great the velocity with which it flew, that he was compelled to turn his face to the west to prevent suffocation, and continue motionless till it passed. Sometimes it comes from no particular point, but moves about in every direction. Mr Bruce, in his journey through the desert of Senaar, had the

* Prov. xxv. 14.

† 1 Kings i.

singular felicity to contemplate this wonderful phenomenon in all its terrific majesty, without injury, although with considerable danger and alarm. In that vast expanse of desert, from west and to north-west of him, he saw a number of prodigious pillars of sand at different distances, moving at times with great celerity, at others stalking on with majestic slowness; at intervals he thought they were coming in a very few minutes to overwhelm him and his companions. Again they would retreat so as to be almost out of sight, their tops reaching to the very clouds. There the tops often separated from the bodies; and these, once disjoined, dispersed in the air, and appeared no more. Sometimes they were broken near the middle, as if struck with a large cannon shot. About noon they began to advance with considerable swiftness upon them, the wind being very strong at north. Eleven of these awful visitors ranged along side of them about the distance of three miles. The greatest diameter of the largest appeared to him at that distance, as if it would measure ten feet. They retired from them with a wind at south-east, leaving an impression upon the mind of our intrepid traveller to which he could give no name, though he candidly admits that one ingredient in it was fear, with a considerable deal of wonder and astonishment. He declares it was in vain to think of flying, the swiftest horse, or fastest sailing ship, could be of no use to carry them out of this danger; and the full persuasion of this rivetted him to the spot where he stood. Next day they were gratified with a similar display of moving pillars, in form and disposition like those already described, only they seemed to be more in number and less in size. They came several times in a direction close upon them; that is, according to Mr Bruce's computation, within less than two miles. They became, immediately after sun rise, like a thick wood, and almost darkened the sun; his rays shining through them for near an hour, gave them an appearance of pillars of fire. At another time they were terrified by an army (as it seemed) of these sand pillars, whose march was constantly

south; a number of which seemed once to be coming directly upon them; and though they were little nearer than two miles, a considerable quantity of sand fell around them. On the twenty-first of November, about eight in the morning, he had a view of the desert to the westward as before, and saw the sands had already begun to rise in immense twisted pillars, which darkened the heavens, and moved over the desert with more magnificence than ever. The sun shining through the pillars, which were thicker, and contained more sand apparently than any of the preceding days, seemed to give those nearest them an appearance as if spotted with stars of gold. A little before twelve, the wind at north ceased, and a considerable quantity of fine sand rained upon them for an hour afterwards.

But this fatal wind more frequently comes from the south, and is then attended with infinitely greater danger to the hapless traveller, whom it overtakes in the Nubian wilds*. It is therefore with strict propriety, that the sacred writers distinguish from all others the whirlwinds of the south, and with peculiar force and beauty, compare the sudden approach of calamity, to their impetuous and destructive career. "I also will laugh at your calamities; I will mock when your fear cometh: when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind: when distress and anguish cometh upon you †." Whole caravans have been overwhelmed in a moment, by the immense quantity of sand which it puts in motion. The Arab who conducted Mr Bruce through the frightful deserts of Senaar, pointed out to him a spot among some sandy hillocks, where the ground seemed to be more elevated than the rest, where one of the largest caravans which ever came out of Egypt, was covered with sand, to the number of several thousand camels. This awful phenomenon, Addison has well described in the following lines, which he puts into the mouth of Syphax, a Numidian prince.

* Maillet.

† Prov. i. 26, 27.

“ So where our wide Numidian states extend,
Sudden the impetuous hurricanes descend,
Wheel through the air, in circling eddies play,
Tear up the sands, and sweep whole plains away.
The helpless traveller, with wild surprise,
Sees the dry desert all around him rise,
And, smothered in the dusty whirlwind, dies.”

The south wind in those arid regions, blowing over an immense surface of burning sand, becomes so charged with electrical matter, as to occasion the greatest danger, and often instant death, to the unwary traveller. A Turk who had twice performed the pilgrimage to Mecca, told Dr Clarke that he had witnessed more than once the direful effects of this hot pestilential wind in the desert. He has known all the water dried out of their skin bottles in an instant, by its influence. The camels alone gave notice of its approach, by making a noise, and burying their mouths and nostrils in the sand. This was considered as an infallible token that the desolation was at hand; and those who imitated the camels, escaped suffocation.

Mr Jackson, in his journey over land from India, had an opportunity of observing on the river Tigris, the progress of the hot winds called by the natives Samiel, which sometimes prove very destructive, particularly between twelve and three o'clock, when the atmosphere is at its greatest degree of heat. Their force, in his opinion, entirely depends on the surface over which they pass. If their career is over a desert where no vegetation rises to retard it, they extend their dimensions with amazing velocity; and then their direction is occasionally to windward. When their flight is over grass, or any other vegetation, they soon diminish and lose much of their force; when it is over a watery surface, they lose all their electrical force, and ascend; yet he sometimes felt their effects across the river where it is at least a mile broad. He mentions the

following circumstance in proof of his assertion: Mr Stephens, a fellow traveller, was bathing in the Tigris, having on a pair of Turkish drawers. On his return from the water, a hot wind came across the river, which made his drawers and himself dry in an instant. Mr Jackson declares he was present, and felt the force of the wind, and saw the effect, else he could not have believed it, though the circumstance had been related to him by another person*.

The account which Mr Bruce gives in his Travels, of this wind, and of its effects, are too remarkable to be omitted. On the sixteenth of November, at eleven o'clock before noon, Idris the native guide cried out with a loud voice, Fall on your faces, for here is the Simoom! Our celebrated traveller upon this turned round, and saw from the south-east, a haze come in colour like the purple part of the rainbow, but not so compressed. It did not occupy twenty yards in breadth, and was about twelve feet high from the ground. It was a kind of blush upon the air, and moved with great rapidity; for he scarcely could turn to fall upon the ground with his head to the northward, when he felt the heat of its current plainly upon his face. The light air which blew for some time after the meteor or purple haze had passed, was of a heat to threaten suffocation.

On the twentieth of the same month, they had another visit from this terrible adversary. The coloured haze on this occasion seemed to be rather less compressed, and to have with it a shade of blue. The edges of it were not defined as those of the former, but like a very thin smoke, with about a yard in the middle tinged with those colours. They all fell upon their faces, and the Simoom passed with a gentle ruffling wind. It continued to blow in this manner till near three o'clock; so they were all taken ill that night, and hardly strength was left them to load the camels and arrange the baggage.

The effects of a third visit were still more injurious: it pro-

* Jackson's Journey, &c. See also Harmer, vol. 1, p. 94, &c.

duced a desperate kind of indifference about life; it brought upon him a degree of cowardice and languor, with which he struggled in vain; and it completely exhausted his strength.

Campbell, in his *Travels*, most significantly calls it a horrid wind, whose consuming blasts extend their ravages all the way from the extreme end of the gulf of Cambaya up to Mosul. It carries along with it fleaks of fire, like threads of silk; instantly strikes dead those that breathe it, and consumes them inwardly to ashes; the flesh soon becoming black as a coal, and dropping off the bones. The numbers that perish by its fatal influence, are sometimes very great. Thevenot states, that in the year 1665, in the month of July, four thousand people died at Bassora by that wind, in three weeks time.

By this powerful and terrific agent, invigorated by the arm, and guided by the finger of Jehovah, was the numerous army of the proud and blaspheming Sennacherib destroyed under the walls of Libnah. In the brief statement of Isaiah it is said, "Then the angel (or, as it may be rendered, the messenger) of the Lord, went forth and smote in the camp of the Assyrians, a hundred and fourscore and five thousand men*." Now this angel of Jehovah is expressly called in verse 7th of the same chapter, Ruach, a blast or wind; which can hardly leave a doubt of the manner in which this passage is to be understood†.

The suffocating heats wafted on the wings of the south wind from the glowing sands of the desert, are felt more or less in all the oriental regions; and even in Italy itself, although far distant from the terrible wastes of the neighbouring continents, where they produce a general languor, and difficulty of respiration. To this pestilential wind our Lord evidently refers in these words: "When ye see the south wind blow; ye say there will be heat; and it cometh to pass‡."

The south wind, so fatal or injurious to the people of the east, must be to them an object of alarm or dismay. Yet, in

* Isai. xxxvii. 36. † Dr Clarke, Note, p. 96, vol. 1. of his edition of Harmer.

‡ Luke xii. 55.

the Song of Solomon, its pestilential blast is invited by the spouse to come and blow upon her garden, and waft its fragrance to her beloved *. If the south winds in Judea are as oppressive as they are in Barbary and Egypt, and as the winds from the desert are at Aleppo, (which, according to Russel, are of the same nature as the south winds in Canaan); or if they are only very hot, as Le Bruin certainly found them in October, would the spouse have desired the north wind to depart, as Bochart renders it, and the south wind to blow? The supposition is too absurd to be admitted. An inspired writer never departs from the strictest truth and propriety in the use of figures according to the rules of oriental composition; and therefore a meaning directly opposite must be the true one, to correspond with the physical character of that wind. The nature of the prayer also requires a different version; for is it to be supposed that the spouse, in the same breath would desire two directly opposite winds to blow upon her garden? It now remains to inquire, if the original text will admit of another version; and it must be evident, that the only difficulty lies in the term which we render Come thou. Now the verb *Bo*, signifies both to come and to depart; literally, to remove from one place to another. In this sense of going or departing, it is used in the prophecies of Jonah twice in one verse: "He found a ship (*Baa*) going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it (*Labo*) to go with them †." It occurs again in this sense in the book of Ruth, and is so rendered in our translation: "He went (*Vayabo*) to lie down at the end of the heap of corn." The going down or departure of the sun, is expressed by a derivative of the same verb in the book of Deuteronomy: "Are they not on the other side Jordan, by the way where the sun *goeth down* ‡?" Joshua uses it in the same sense: "Unto the great sea, (*Mebo*) toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast.§" The passage then, under consideration, may be

* Song iv. 16.

† Jonah i. 3.

‡ Deut. xi. 30.

§ Josh. i. 4.

rendered in this manner, putting the address to the south wind in a parenthesis: Arise, O north wind, (retire thou south,) blow upon my garden, let the spices thereof flow forth, that my beloved may come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.

Those critics who favour the common interpretation contend, that the south wind is warm and humid, and by its gentle heat, clothes the face of nature with all its diversified beauties. This is, in particular, the opinion of Sanctius; but, recollecting that Virgil speaks of the south wind as destructive to flowers, he anticipates the objection by gravely asserting, that the south wind may be destructive in Italy, and stormy in Africa, yet placid and salubrious in Palestine, because it blows from the sea, from which it acquires a humid warmth and softness. Winds blowing from the same points in different countries, may perhaps assume different characters, and produce different and even contrary effects; but the opinion of Sanctius is entirely groundless. The south wind in Palestine can scarcely be said to blow from the sea; it only crosses the Red sea in its way from the vast deserts of Africa; after which it traverses the burning sands of Arabia before it reaches the land of Canaan; and consequently it comes on that country strongly charged with electrical matter, and glowing like the heat of a large oven, the effects of which are so violent, that the inhabitants find it necessary to shut fast the doors and windows of their apartments. Such an incommoding or injurious wind is surely not a natural object of desire. Even in Italy, where it blows directly across the Mediterranean, it is deleterious, as we know from the authentic testimony of Virgil:

“ ——— namque urget ab alto

Arboribusque satisque Notus pecorique sinister.”

Geor. b. 1. l. 44.

But if it be so hurtful to vegetable and animal existence in the distant fields of Italy, it must be greatly more injurious in Palestine, which borders on the deserts, the native land of the

purple haze. This conclusion, were any confirmation necessary to establish so plain a truth, is verified by the testimony of Le Bruin, who, in the course of his travels in Palestine, found from experience, that it produced an oppressive heat, not the gentle and inviting warmth which Sanctius supposed. No traveller, so far as the writer has been able to discover, gives a favourable account of the south wind; consequently, it cannot be an object of desire; the view therefore which Harmer first gave of this text, is in every respect entitled to the preference: "Awake, O north wind, (depart thou south,) blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out."

In Syria, lightnings are frequent in the autumnal months. Seldom a night passes without a great deal of lightning in the north-west, but without thunder; but, when it appears in the west or south-west points, it is a sure sign of approaching rain, and is often attended with thunder*. It has been observed already, that a squall of wind and clouds of dust, are the usual forerunners of the first rains. To these natural phenomena, the sacred writers frequently allude; and in the precise order, which has been marked in the preceding observations. The royal Psalmist, in a very beautiful strain, ascribes them to the immediate agency of heaven: "He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the rain; he bringeth the wind out of his treasures†." The cisterns of the clouds are replenished by exhalations from every part of the globe; and, when they are ready to open and pour out their refreshing showers on the parched ground, the glad tidings are announced by the rapid lightning, and the precious treasure is scattered over the field by the attendant winds; and, that the sweet singer of Israel looked through nature with an accurate discriminating eye, is confirmed by the concurring testimony of all ages. In the following passage, the prophet Jeremiah seems to have borrowed the very words of the Psalmist: "When he uttereth his voice, there is a multi-

* Russel's Hist.

† Psal. cxxxv. 7.

rude of waters in the heavens, and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth ; he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures*.” Here, by a sublime metaphor, is thunder denominated the voice of God, and the harbinger of the rain ; and the pious seer, recognizes in the rolling of the thunder, and the effusion of the showers of heaven by which they are followed, the immediate agency of him who made the earth by his power, who has established the world by his wisdom, and has stretched out the heavens by his discretion. These lightnings, thunders, and rains, he justly calls the treasures of Jehovah ; things precious and rare in those parts of the earth, which the beneficent Creator has laid up under his own management, for the preservation and comfort of man and beast. So deeply did the prophets feel the value of the autumnal rains, which the God whom they served, shed upon the dry and thirsty ground after the drought of summer ; with so much beauty and correctness did they describe the various phenomena of the revolving seasons ; and how much greater energy appears in their descriptions, after we have gained an acquaintance with the state of the weather in that part of the world ! The most energetic, the most just and beautiful descriptions of uninspired bards, make but a distant approach to the sublime dictates of inspiration. With the passages quoted from the Psalmist and the Prophet, let the following lines of Virgil, the prince of Roman poets, be compared, and the difference will immediately appear.

“ Atque hæc ut certis possimus discere signis,
 Aestusque, pluviasque et agentes frigora ventos,
 Ipse Pater statuit quid menstrua luna moneret ;
 Quo signo caderent Austri, quid sæpe videntes
 Agricolaë, propius stabulis armenta tenerent.”

Geor. b. 1. l. 351. &c.

“ And that we may learn these things by certain signs, both heats and rains, and cold bringing winds, Father *Jove* himself,

* Jer. x. 13.

has appointed what the monthly moon should betoken; with what signs the south winds should fall; from what common observations the husbandman should learn to keep his herds nearer their stalls*.”

Before taking leave of this subject, it may not be improper to remark, the wisdom and goodness of God displayed in the temperature of an oriental sky. The excessive heats of the day, which are sometimes incommodious even in the depth of winter, are compensated and rendered consistent with animal and vegetable life, by a corresponding degree of coolness in the night. The patriarch Jacob, takes notice of this fact in his expostulation with Laban: “By day the heat consumed me, and the frost by night.” Mr Bruce, in like manner, frequently remarks in his journey through the deserts of Senaar, where the heat of the day was almost insupportable, that the coldness of the night was very great. When Rauwolf travelled on the Euphrates, he was wont to wrap himself up in a frize coat in the night time, to defend himself from the frost and dew, which, he observes, are very frequent and violent there. Thevenot traversed the very fields where Jacob tended the flocks of Laban; and he found the heats of the day so intense, that although he wore upon his head a large black handkerchief, after the manner of the orientals when they travel, yet, his forehead was frequently so scorched, as to swell exceedingly, and actually to suffer excoriation; his hands being more exposed to the burning sun, were continually parched; and he learned from experience, to sympathize with the toil-worn shepherd of the east. In Europe, the days and nights resemble each other, with respect to the qualities of heat and cold; but if credit be due to the representations of Chardin, it is quite otherwise in oriental climates. In the Lower Asia, particularly, the day is always hot, and as soon as the sun is fifteen degrees above the horizon, no cold is felt in the depth of winter itself: on the contrary, the nights are as cold as at

* Davidson.

Paris in the month of March. It is for this reason, that in Turkey and Persia, they always used furred habits in the country, such only being sufficient to resist the cold of the night. Chardin travelled both in Arabia and in Mesopotamia, the scene of Jacob's adventures, both in winter and in summer, and attested on his return, the truth of what the patriarch asserted, that he was scorched with heat in the day, and stiffened with cold in the night. This difference in the state of the air in twenty-four hours, is in some places extremely great, and according to that respectable traveller, not conceivable by those who have not seen it; one would imagine, they had passed in a moment from the violent heats of summer to the depth of winter. Thus it has pleased a beneficent deity, to temper the heat of the day by the coolness of the night, without which, the greatest part of the east would be a parched and sterile desert, equally destitute of vegetable and animal life. This account is confirmed by a modern traveller. When Campbell was passing through Mesopotamia, he sometimes lay at night out in the open air, rather than enter a town; on which occasions, he says, "I found the weather as piercing cold, as it was distressfully hot in the day time." The same difference between the days and nights, has been observed on the Syrian bank of the Euphrates; the mornings are cold, and the days intensely hot*. This difference is distinctly marked in these words of the prophet: "Therefore, thus saith the Lord of Jehoiakim king of Judah; he shall have none to sit upon the throne of David; and his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost†." So just and accurate are the numerous allusions of Scripture to the natural state of the oriental regions; and so necessary it is to study with care, the natural history of those celebrated and interesting countries, to enable us to ascertain with clearness and precision, the meaning, or to discern the beauty and force of numerous passages of the sacred volume.

* Ham. vol. 1. p. 114.

† Jer. xxxvi. 30.

CHAP. X.

OF THE GENERAL FERTILITY OF PALESTINE.

THE soil, both of the maritime and inland parts of Syria and Phenicia, is of a light loamy nature, and easily cultivated. Syria may be considered as a country consisting of three long strips of land, exhibiting different qualities: one extending along the Mediterranean, forming a warm humid valley, the salubrity of which is doubtful, but which is extremely fertile; the other, which forms its frontier, is a hilly rugged soil, but more salubrious: the third, lying beyond the eastern hills, combines the drought of the latter with the heat of the former. We have seen by what a happy combination of climate and soil this province unites in a small compass the advantages and productions of different zones, insomuch, that the God of nature seems to have designed it for one of the most agreeable habitations of this continent. The soil is a fine mould, without stones, and almost without even the smallest pebble. Volney himself, who furnishes the particulars of this statement, is compelled to admit, that what is said of its actual fertility, exactly corresponds with the idea given of it in the Hebrew scriptures. Wherever wheat is sown, if the rains do not fail, it repays the cultivator with profusion, and grows to the height of a man. The mount of Olives near Jerusalem, and several other districts in Judea and Galilee, are covered with olive plantations, whose fruit is equal to any produced in the Levant. The fig trees in the neighbourhood of Joppa, are equally beautiful and productive as the olive*. Were the Holy land as well inhabited and cultivated as formerly, Dr Shaw declares, it would still be more fruitful than the very best part of Syria or Phenicia; for the soil itself is generally much richer, and all things considered, yields a preferable crop. Thus, the cotton which is gathered in the plains of Rama, Esdraelon, and Za-

* Hasselquist.

bulon, is in greater esteem, according to that excellent writer, than what is cultivated near Sidon and Tripoli; neither is it possible, for pulse, wheat, or grain of any kind, to be richer or better tasted, than what is commonly sold at Jerusalem. The barrenness, or scarcity rather, of which some authors may either ignorantly or maliciously complain, does not proceed, in the opinion of Dr Shaw, from the incapacity or natural unfruitfulness of the country, but from the want of inhabitants, and from the great aversion to labour and industry in those few by whom it is possessed. The perpetual discords and depredations among the petty princes who share this fine country, greatly obstruct the operations of the husbandman, who must have small encouragement to sow, when it is quite uncertain who shall gather in the harvest. It is in other respects a fertile country, and still capable of affording to its neighbours, the like ample supplies of corn and oil, which it is known to have done in the time of Solomon, who gave yearly to Hiram, twenty thousand measures of wheat for food to his household, and twenty measures of pure oil.

The parts about Jerusalem particularly, being rocky and mountainous, have been therefore supposed to be barren and unfruitful: yet, granting this conclusion, which is however far from being just, a country is not to be characterized from one single district of it, but from the whole. And besides, the blessing which was given to Judah, was not of the same kind with the blessing of Asher or of Issachar, that "his bread should be fat or his land pleasant," but that "his eyes should be red with wine, and his teeth should be white with milk*." In the estimation of the Jewish lawgiver, milk and honey, (the chief dainties and subsistence of the earlier ages, as they still continue to be of the Bedouin Arabs,) are the glory of all lands; these productions are either actually enjoyed in the lot of Judah, or at least, might be obtained by proper care and application. The abundance of wine alone, is wanting at pre-

* Gen. xlix. 12.

sent; yet, the acknowledged goodness of that little, which is still made at Jerusalem and Hebron, clearly proves, that these barren rocks as they are called, would yield a much greater quantity, if the abstemious Turk and Arab would permit the vine to be further propagated and improved.

Wild honey, which formed a part of the food of John the Baptist in the wilderness, may indicate to us the great plenty of it in those deserts; and, that consequently taking the hint from nature, and enticing the bees into hives and larger colonies, it might be produced in much greater quantity. Josephus, accordingly calls Jericho *μελιτ τοτρυφον χωραν*, the honey-bearing country. The great abundance of wild honey is often mentioned in Scripture; a memorable instance of which, occurs in the first book of Samuel: "And all they of the land came to a wood, and there was honey upon the ground; and when the people were come to the wood, behold the honey dropped*." This circumstance perfectly accords with the view which Moses gave of the promised land, in the song with which he closed his long and eventful career: "He made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock†." That good land preserved its character in the time of David, who thus celebrates the distinguishing bounty of God to his chosen people: "He would have fed them also with the finest of the wheat, and with honey out of the rock would I have satisfied thee‡." In these holy strains, the sacred poet availed himself of the most valuable products of Canaan, to lead the faith and hope of his nation to bounties of a higher order, of greater price, and more urgent necessity, than any which the soil even of that favoured region, stimulated and sustained as it certainly was by the special blessing of heaven, produced,—the bounties of sovereign and redeeming mercy, purchased with the blood, and imparted by the spirit of the Son of God.

As the mountains of Palestine abound in some places with thyme, rosemary, sage, and other aromatic plants, in which

* 1 Sam. xiv. 25.

† Deut. xxxii. 14.

‡ Psal. lxxxi. 16.

the bee chiefly delights; so, in other places, they are covered with shrubs and a delicate short grass, which is more grateful to the cattle, than that which the fallow-grounds or the meadows produce. The grazing and feeding of cattle is not peculiar to Judea, it is still practised all over mount Libanus, the Castravan mountains, and Barbary, where the higher grounds are appropriated to this purpose, while the plains and valleys are reserved for tillage.

But even laying aside the profits which might arise from grazing, by the sale of butter, milk, wool, and the great number of cattle which were to be daily disposed of, particularly at Jerusalem, for common food and for the service of the temple; these mountainous tracts would be highly valuable on another account, especially if they were planted with olive trees, one acre of which is of more value, than twice the extent of arable ground. It may be presumed in like manner, that the vine was not neglected in a soil and exposure so well adapted to its cultivation.

“ ——— Juvat Ismara Baccho

Conserere atque olea magnum vestire Taburnum.”

Geor. b. 2.

“It is worth while to plant (even) Ismarus with vines, and clothe vast Taburnus with olives.”

Few traces are now to be found, except at Jerusalem and Hebron, of those extensive vineyards, which in better times adorned the hills of Canaan, and so amply rewarded the labours of the cultivator; but this is owing not to the ungratefulness of the soil, but to the sloth and bigotry of its present possessors. The vine is not of so durable a nature as the olive, and requires, besides, an unceasing culture and attention; while the superstitious Turk scruples to encourage the propagation of a plant, whose fruit may be applied to uses forbidden by the rules of his religion. But the general benefit arising from the olive tree, and its longevity and hardiness, have been the means of continuing down to the present times, clumps of

several thousands, to mark out to us the possibility, as they are undoubtedly the remains, of more extensive plantations. Now, if to these productions be joined, several plots of arable ground, which lie scattered all over the valleys and windings of the mountains in the lot of Judah and Benjamin, we shall find, that the inheritance even of these tribes which are supposed to have had the most barren part of the country, fell to them in pleasant places, and that theirs was a goodly heritage.

Besides the great quantity of grapes and raisins, says Dr Shaw in a note, which are brought daily to the markets of Jerusalem and the neighbouring villages, Hebron alone, sends every year to Egypt, three hundred camel loads of the robb which they call dabash, the same word which is simply rendered honey in the sacred volume; as in the command of the patriarch Jacob to his sons: "Carry down the man a present of the best things of the land, a little balm, and a little honey:" For honey, properly so called, could not be a rarity there, so great as dabash must be from the want of vineyards in Egypt. Several different substances appear to have obtained the name of honey among the ancient Israelites; which may be inferred from this precept: "Ye shall burn no leaven, nor any kind of honey in any offering*." Besides the honey of grapes, of bees, and of the palm, the honey of the reed, or sugar, might be of great antiquity. Thus, the term yaar, which our translators render the honey-comb†, is by some interpreters, taken for a reed, or the mel arundinis of the Latins, and the μέλι καλαμινον of the Greeks. Strabo mentions sugar as a succedaneum for the honey of bees; εἰσῆκε δὲ καὶ περὶ καλαμῶν, ὅτι ποιεῖσι μέλι, μελισσῶν μὴ ἔσων. And Lucan,

"Quique bibunt tenera dulces ab arundine succôs."

They drink sweet juices from the tender reed.

The mountainous parts of the Holy land are so far from being inhospitable, unfruitful, or the refuse of the land of Canaan, that in the division of this country, the mountain of Hebron

* Lev. ii, 11.

† Song v. 1.

was granted to Caleb as a particular favour; "Now therefore, give me this mountain, of which the Lord spake in that day *." In the time of Asa, the "hill country of Judah" mustered five hundred and eighty thousand men of valour†; an argument beyond dispute, that the land was able to maintain them. Even in the present times, though cultivation and improvement are exceedingly neglected, while the plains and valleys, although fruitful as ever, lie almost entirely desolate, every little hill is crowded with inhabitants. If this part of the Holy land was composed, as some object, only of naked rocks and precipices, why is it better peopled than the plains of Esdraelon, Rama, Acre, or Zabulon, which are all of them extremely fertile and delightful? It cannot be urged that the inhabitants live with more safety on the hills and mountains, than on the plains, as there are neither walls nor fortifications to secure their villages and encampments; and except in the range of Lebanon, and some other mountains, few or no places of difficult access; so that both of them are equally exposed to the insults of an enemy. But the reason is obvious; they find among these mountainous rocks and precipices, sufficient conveniences for themselves, and much greater for their cattle. Here they have bread to the full, while their flocks and their herds browse upon richer herbage, and both man and beast quench their thirst from springs of excellent water, which is but too much wanted, especially in the summer season, through all the plains of Syria. This fertility of Canaan is fully confirmed by writers of great reputation, whose impartiality cannot be justly suspected. Tacitus calls it a fruitful soil, *uber solum*‡; and Justin affirms, that in this country the purity of the air, and the fertility of the soil are equally admirable; *Sed non minor loci ejus apricitatis quam ubertatis admiratio est*§.

The justice of these brief accounts, Dr Shaw, and almost every modern traveller, fully verifies. When he travelled in

* Josh. xiv. 12.

† 2 Chron. xiv. 8.

‡ B. 5. ch. 6.

§ Hist. B. 36. ch. 3.

Syria and Phenicia, in December and January, the whole country, he remarks, looked verdant and cheerful: and the woods particularly, which are chiefly planted with the gall-bearing oak, were every where bestrewed with a variety of anemones, ranunculusses, colchicas, and mandrakes. Several pieces of ground near Tripoli were full of liquorice; and at the mouth of a famous grotto he saw an elegant species of the blue lily, the same with Morison's *lilium Persicum florens*. In the beginning of March, the plains, particularly between Jaffa and Rama, were every where planted with a beautiful variety of fritillaries, tulips of innumerable hues, and a profusion of the rarest and most beautiful flowers; while the hills and the mountains were covered with yellow pollium, and some varieties of thyme, sage, and rosemary*.

The account which has been now given of the soil and productions of Canaan, will enable the reader to perceive with greater clearness, the force and justice of the promise made by Moses to his nation, a little before he died: "The Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land; a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths, that spring out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates, a land of oil olive and honey†.

If to the natural fertility of this highly favoured country be added, the manner in which it was divided among the tribes of Israel, it will furnish an easy and satisfactory answer to the question which the infidel has often put: "How could so small a country as Canaan maintain so immense a population, as we find in the writings of the Old Testament?" That rich and fertile region was divided into small inheritances, on which the respective proprietors lived and reared their families. Necessity, not less than a spirit of industry, required that no part of the surface capable of cultivation should be suffered to lie waste. The husbandman carried his improvements up the sides of the steepest and most

* Shaw's Trav.

† Deut. viii. 7.

rugged mountains, to the very top; he converted every patch of earth into a vineyard, or olive plantation; he covered the bare rocks with soil, and thus turned them into fruitful fields; where the steep was too great to admit of an inclined plane, he cut away the face of the precipice, and built walls around the mountain to support the earth, and planted his terraces with the vine and the olive. These circles of excellent soil were seen rising gradually from the bottom to the top of the mountains, where the vine and the olive, shading the intermediate rocks with the liveliest verdure, and bending under the load of their valuable produce, amply rewarded the toils of the cultivator. The remains of those hanging gardens, those terrace plantations, after the lapse of so many centuries, the revolutions of empire, and the long decline of industry among the miserable slaves that now occupy that once highly favoured land, may still be distinctly traced on the hills and mountains of Judea. Every spot of ground was in this manner brought into a state of cultivation; every particle of soil was rendered productive; and by turning a stream of water into every field where it was practicable, and leading the little rills into which they divided it, to every plantation, every tree, and every plant, they secured for the most part, a constant succession of crops. Such was the management which Virgil recommended to the cultivators of Italy.

“Deinde satisfluvium inducit, rivosque sequentes.

Et cum exustus ager morientibus æstuat herbis,

Ecce, supercilio clivosi tramitis undam

Elicit: illa cadens raucum per levia murmur

Saxa ciet scatebrisque arentia temperat arva.”

Geor. b. 1, l. 110.

“Then on the springing corn drives the stream, and ductile rills. And when the field is scorched with raging heat, the herbs all dying, lo from the brow of a hilly tract he decoys the

torrent, which falling down the smooth-worn rocks, awakes the hoarse murmur, and with gurgling streams allays the thirsty lands *."

"Thus much is certain," says Volney, "and it is the advantage of hot over cold countries, that in the former, wherever there is water, vegetation may be perpetually maintained, and made to produce an uninterrupted succession of fruits to flowers, and flowers to fruits. In cold, nay even in temperate climates, on the contrary, nature benumbed for several months, loses in a sterile slumber the third part, or even half the year. The soil which has produced grain, has not time before the decline of summer heat to mature vegetables: a second crop is not to be expected; and the husbandman sees himself condemned to a long and fatal repose. Syria is exempt from these inconveniences; if therefore, it so happens, that its productions are not such as its natural advantages would lead us to expect, *it is less owing to its physical than to its political state.*"

On this question, we have to add the temperament of the people to the physical powers of the country. The Israelite lived upon his own farm, in all the simplicity of rural life; was content with the produce of his own fields; a little wheat in the ear, or in meal, a few grapes and olives, dates or almonds, generally constituted his repast: and the great heat of the climate imperiously required him to lead a frugal and abstemious life. It is well known, that the inhabitants of warm countries subsist on much less and much lighter food, than the people of colder latitudes, and by consequence, are capable of living in more crowded habitations. If all these circumstances are duly considered, the countless numbers of people, which according to the Old Testament writers, once inhabited the land of promise, will neither appear incredible, nor exaggerated †.

The extraordinary fruitfulness of Canaan, and the number of its inhabitants during the prosperous times of the Jewish

* Davidson.

† See this statement confirmed by Maundrel, Travels p. 100.

commonwealth, may be traced to another, and still more powerful cause than any that has been mentioned,—the special blessing of Heaven, which that favoured people for many ages exclusively enjoyed. We know from the testimony of Moses, that the tribes of Israel reposed under the immediate care of Jehovah, their covenanted God and King, enjoyed his peculiar favour, and were multiplied and sustained by a special compact, in which the rest of the nations had no share: “The Lord shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers to give it*.” But the blessing of Jehovah converts the desert into a fruitful field: for thus it is promised, (and what God promises he is able also to perform): “The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose; it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon; they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God; for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert, and the parched land shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitations of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass, with reeds and rushes†.” In this passage, the blessings of salvation as exhibited in the present dispensation of grace, are certainly intended; but the use of these figures would be quite improper, if the special favour of God could produce no such important changes on the face of nature.

Indeed, the divine blessing has not bestowed the same degree of fruitfulness on every part of Canaan. This fertile country is surrounded by deserts of immense extent, exhibiting a dreary waste of loose and barren sand, on which the skill and industry of man are able to make no impression. The only vegetable productions which occasionally meet the eye of the traveller in

* Deut. xxviii. 1—12.

† Isa. xxxv. 7.

these frightful solitudes, are a coarse sickly grass, thinly sprinkled on the sand; a plot of senna, or other saline or bitter herb, or an acacia bush; even these but rarely present themselves to his notice, and afford him little satisfaction when they do, because they warn him that he is yet far distant from a place of abundance and repose. Moses, who knew these deserts well, calls them "great and terrible," "a desert land," "the waste howling wilderness." But the completest picture of the sandy desert is drawn by the pencil of Jeremiah, in which, with surprising force and brevity he has exhibited every circumstance of terror, which the modern traveller details with so much pathos and minuteness; "Neither say they where is the Lord that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, that led us through the wilderness, through a land of deserts and of pits, through a land of drought, and of the shadow of death, through a land which no man passed through, and where no man dwelt*.

Beside these inhospitable deserts which environ the land of promise, the inspired writers mention several wildernesses within its proper limits. In sacred language, a mountainous, or less fruitful tract, where the towns and villages are thinly scattered, and single habitations few and far between, is distinguished by the name of the wilderness. The forerunner of our Lord resided in the wilderness of Judah till he commenced his public ministry. We are informed, in the book of Genesis, that Ishmael settled in the wilderness of Paran; and in the first book of Samuel, that David took refuge from the persecution of Saul in the same desert, where it appears the numerous flocks of Nabal the Carmelite were pastured. Such places, therefore, were not absolute deserts, but thinly peopled, or less fertile districts. But this remark will scarcely apply to the wilderness where our Lord was tempted of the devil. It is a most miserable, dry and barren solitude, "consisting of high rocky mountains, so torn and disordered, as if the earth had

* Jer. ii 6.

here suffered some great convulsion, in which its very bowels had been turned outward*." A more dismal and solitary place can scarcely be found in the whole earth. About one hour's journey from the foot of the mountains which environ this wilderness, rises the lofty Quarantania, which Maundrell was told is the mountain into which the devil carried our blessed Saviour, that he might shew him all the kingdoms and glory of the world. It is, as the evangelist styles it, "an exceeding high mountain," and in its ascent both difficult and dangerous. It has a small chapel at the top, and another about half way up, founded on a prominent part of the rock. Near the latter are several caves and holes in the sides of the mountain, occupied formerly by hermits, and even in present times the resort of religious devotees, who repair to these lonely cells to keep their lent, in imitation of our Lord's fasting in the wilderness forty days.

* Maundrell's Travels.

PART II.

OF THE

NATURAL HISTORY OF THE EAST.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF SCRIPTURE.

CHAP. I.

THE HERBS AND SHRUBS OF CANAAN AND THE SURROUNDING COUNTRIES.

Alocs.

THIS is a sort of tree, which in some parts of India rises to the height of eight or ten feet. It is crowned with a large bunch of leaves about four feet in length, and adorned with double blossoms of a red colour intermixed with yellow. The fruit is round like a large pea, white and red; the juice of these leaves is drawn by cutting them with a knife, and is afterwards received in bottles.

The eastern geographers inform us, that the wood of aloes, the smell of which is exquisite, is found only in those provinces of India which are comprehended in the first climate; but in what region it arrives at the highest degree of excellence, they have not been able to determine.

The Hebrew אהלים, ahalim, in Mr Taylor's opinion, probably signifies aloes-trees. The Vulgate reads, ut tabernacula quæ fixit Dominus, "as tents which the Lord hath spread;" but the Hebrew may be translated thus, As the ahalim which the Lord hath planted. Our translators render it, lign-aloes: the Septuagint and Jerome sometimes translate ahalim, stacte, or aloe; but, as the aloes-tree is not common in Arabia or the

neighbouring countries, the Rabbins translate ahalim, santal. The aloes of Syria, Rhodes, and Candia, called Aspalathus, is a thorny shrub; the wood is used by perfumers, after they have taken off the bark, to give consistency to their perfumes.

But the true aloes is a plant or herb: the leaves are about two inches thick, prickly and chamfered; in the middle, rises a stem, in which is a white kernel, extremely light and almost round. From this plant is extracted the drug named aloes, which is a liquor extremely bitter, used in embalming to prevent the putrefaction of the dead body. Nicodemus bought about a hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes, to embalm the body of his Redeemer*. It was employed with myrrh and cinnamon, to perfume the bed of the lewd woman†; and in the Song, the spouse says, that myrrh, aloes, and all manner of perfumes, are to be found in the garden of her beloved‡.

Hyssop.

Hyssop is mentioned as one of the smallest of herbs§. It has a bitter taste, and grows on the mountains near Jerusalem. A handful of this herb, gathered, it is probable, on Calvary, near the cross, was imbued with vinegar, and applied to the parched lips of the dying Saviour. Or the hyssop of John might be what is called a reed or cane by the evangelists Mark and Matthew||.

Under the law, it was commonly used in purifications as a sprinkler. When the people of Israel came out of Egypt, they were commanded to take a bunch of hyssop, to dip it in the blood of the paschal lamb, and sprinkle with it the lintel and the two side posts of the door. Sometimes they added a little scarlet wool. It was also used in sprinkling the leper. The hyssop is extremely well adapted to such purposes. It literally grows in bunches, putting out abundance of suckers from a single root. It grows about a foot and a half high; and at

* John xix. 39. † Prov. vii. 17. ‡ Ch. iv. 14. Taylor's edition of Calmet, v. 1.

§ 1 Kings iv. 33.

|| Matth. xxvii. 48. Mark xv. 36.

distances on both sides of its stock, it pushes out longish leaves, and carries a blossom on the top of the stem, of an azure colour and like an ear of corn.

The Rose.

Considerable diversity of sentiment prevails among the learned, in relation to the true meaning of the original term *חבצלה*, habetzeleth, in our version translated rose. The Seventy and Jerome render it "the flower of the fields;" the Chaldee translates it rose, in which it is followed by the greater part of western interpreters. From its intimate connection with the lily of the valleys, indisputably an uncultivated flower, it is natural to conclude, that the inspired writer alluded to the wild rose. In the opinion of other natural historians, the habetzeleth is a bulbous-rooted plant; because the name may be derived from Habab he loved, and Batzel a bulb or onion; and they suppose with great probability, that the sacred writers mean the asphodel, whose flowers resemble those of the lily. It is a very beautiful and odoriferous flower; and highly praised by two of the greatest masters of Grecian song. Hesiod says it grows commonly in the woods; and Homer calls the Elysian fields, "meads filled with asphodel:" words which agree with the sentiment of the Hebrew here, if we take Sharon (as seems perfectly proper) for the common field. "I am the asphodel of the meads or woods, the lily of the valleys, or the uncultivated fields."

The rose in the east is celebrated for the richness of its fragrance and the beauty of its flowers; it is even regarded as the sovereign of the garden. Hafez the Persian poet says, "When the rose comes into the garden, the violet prostrates itself before it with its face to the ground." The odes of Anacreon sufficiently prove how greatly the rose was esteemed among the ancient Greeks. Horace praises it with almost equal ardour. It occupied a conspicuous place in every chapel; it was a principal ornament in every festive meeting, and at every solemn sacrifice.

“ Quis multa gracilis te puer in rosa
Perfusus liquidis urguet odoribus.”

B. 1. Car. v.

And again,

“ Huc vina et unguenta, et nimium breves
Flores amænæ ferre jube rosæ.”

B. 2. Car. iii

“ Hither order your slaves to bring the wine, and the perfumes, and the grateful flowers of the too transitory rose.”

It was right to consecrate a plant so lovely to the service of religion. Solomon has accordingly chosen it to represent the matchless excellencies of his divine Redeemer: “ I am the rose of Sharon *;” and the prophet Isaiah, to give us some faint conception of the wonderful change which the gospel produced in the state of the world after the ascension of Christ, “ the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.”

The Lily.

This flower seems, from several allusions in the Scriptures, to have been greatly valued among the Jews. The snowy whiteness of its petals, the delicacy of its form, and the uncommon elegance of all its parts, cannot but strike with admiration every attentive observer. The lily of the field sometimes appears with unrivalled magnificence. The remark is justified by the following statement of Mr Salt: “ At a few miles from Adowa, we discovered a new and beautiful species of *Amaryllis*, which bore from ten to twelve spikes of bloom on each stem, as large as those of the ‘ *Bella-donna*,’ springing from one common receptacle. The general colour of the corolla was white, and every petal was marked with a single streak of bright purple down the middle. The flower was sweet scented, and its smell, though much more powerful, resembled that of the lily of the valley. This superb plant excited the admiration of the whole party; and it brought immediately to my recollection, the beautiful comparison used on a particular occasion, by our Saviour: ‘ yet, I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these†.’ ”

* Song ii. 1.

† Voyage to Abyssinia, p. 419.

The lily occupied a conspicuous place among the ornaments of the temple and its furniture. The brim of the molten sea, was wrought with flowers of lilies; the chapiters that were upon the tops of the pillars, were of lily work, and the top of the pillars was ornamented in the same manner. The Saviour is represented in the Song, as feeding among the lilies: and the graces of the church are like a heap of wheat set about with lilies*.

This plant is the שושן, Shushan of the Hebrews, from the term שש, Schesch, which signifies six, because it has that number of leaves. Souciet however affirms, that the lily mentioned in the Scripture by the name Shushan, is the crown imperial; this is the Persian lily, the tusaī of the Persians, the royal lily or *lilium basileium* of the Greeks. In reality, it appears from the Canticles, that the lily spoken of by Solomon, was red, and distilled a certain liquor, Cant. v. 13. There are crown imperials with yellow flowers, but those with red are the most common; they are always bent downwards, and disposed in the manner of a crown at the extremity of the stem, which has a tuft of leaves at the top. At the bottom of each leaf of this flower, is a certain watery humour, forming, as it were, a very white pearl, which gradually distils very clear and pure drops of water. This water is probably what the spouse in the Song calls myrrh: "His lips like lilies dropping sweet smelling myrrh†."

The Reed or Cane.

The reed grows in immense numbers on the banks and in the streams of the Nile. Extensive woods of the canes *Phragmit* and *Calama magrostes*, which rise to the height of twelve yards, cover the marshes in the neighbourhood of Suez. The stems are conveyed all over Egypt and Arabia, and are employed by the orientals in constructing the flat terraces of their habitations. Calmet thinks it probable, that this extensive region of canes gave name to the Red sea, which in those

* Song ii. 16. and vii. 2.

† Taylor's Calmet, vol. 2.

times entirely inundated the marshes on its borders. Jam Suph is a sea that produces canes; and as the Arabs denote two sorts of canes by the general name *buz*, the surname being added afterwards, Moses, the sacred historian, following the same ancient denominations, did not attend to the specific niceties of botanology. This same leader of the people, underwent the first dangers of his life in a cradle made of the reeds, donax or hagni.

This information induced Calmet to conclude, that in these reeds which covered the banks of the Nile, we have what our translation renders the flags (*suph*), in which Moses was concealed in his trunk, or ark of bulrushes, *goma*. The remarkable height to which they grow, and their vast abundance, lead to the persuasion, that in some thick tuft of them, the future prophet of Israel was concealed. It appears also, from the interrogation of Job, that the *goma* cannot reach its full stature without an abundant supply of water: "Can the rush—*goma*, rather the tall strong cane or reed, grow up without water?" This plant, therefore, being a tall reed, is, with great propriety, associated with the *kanah*, or cane: "In the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass, with *canes and reeds* *."

The sweet smelling reed is common in the deserts of Arabia. It is gathered near Jambo, a port town of Arabia Petrea, from whence it is brought into Egypt. This plant was probably among the number of those which the queen of Sheba presented to Solomon; and what seems to confirm the opinion is, that it is still very much esteemed by the Arabs on account of its fragrance.

This, in all probability, is the sweet cane of Jeremiah, who calls it prime, or *excellent*, and associates it with incense from Sheba. "To what purpose cometh there to me incense from Sheba, and the sweet cane from a far country†?" And, in allusion to the same plant, Isaiah complains, in the name of Jehovah, "Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money‡."

* Isai. xxxv. 7.

† Jer. vi. 20.

‡ Isai. xliii. 24.

In the book of Exodus, it is called "sweet calamus," and is said to come "from a far country;" which agrees with the declaration of ancient writers, that the best is brought from India*.

Spikenard.

Spikenard belongs to the order of *gramina*, and is of different species. In some parts of India, it covers the surface of the ground like common grass, growing in large tufts, close to each other, very rank, and in general from three to four feet in length. Planted in gardens, it shoots up spikes about six feet in height. Its aroma is so rich and abundant, that when it is trodden by the foot, the air is perfumed all around with its fragrance. All the species of spikenard are hot and drying. The Indian nard, which is the most precious, is of a yellowish colour, inclining to purple, with long spikes, covered with long odoriferous bristles. The taste is somewhat sharp and bitter, and dry upon the tongue; and afterwards leaves the mouth full of a very agreeable savour. The whole plant has a strong aromatic odour; but both the smell and the medical virtues, which, in cases of fever, are said to be very powerful, reside principally in the husky roots, which in chewing, says Dr Blane, have a bitter, warm, pungent taste, accompanied with some degree of that kind of glow in the mouth which cardomums occasion.

An inferior species of nard is to be found in Syria and Asia Minor: it is probable, indeed, from the great demand for the unguent manufactured in these countries, that any grateful aromatic, resembling spikenard, was allowed to pass for that valuable plant. Horace mentions the *Nardus Assyria*; a proof that a plant of that name grew on the banks of the Euphrates.

" ——— et rosa

Canos adorati capillos,

Dum licet, Assyriaque nardo." *Hor. b. 2, ode xi.*

Dioscorides also mentions the *Nardus Syriaca* as a species

* Taylor's Calmet, vol. 4.

different from the Indica, which certainly was brought from some of the remote parts of India.

This plant was highly valued among the ancients, both as an article of luxury and medicine. "The unguentum nardinum seems, from the numerous allusions to it in the odes of Horace, to have been the favourite perfume which was used at the ancient baths and feasts; and that voluptuous Roman reckoned it so valuable, that as much of it as could be contained in a small box of precious stone, he considered as a sort of equivalent for a large vessel of wine, and a handsome quota for a guest to contribute at an entertainment, according to the custom of antiquity."

"—— Nardo vinum merebere

Nardi parvus onyx eliciet cadum*."

In these lines, the poet refers not to the plant itself, but to the ointment manufactured from it, which bore its name. From these statements it is evident, that Arabia and Syria produced a fragrant grass, known to the ancients by the name of spikenard, but of a different species from Indian nard; and that the unguent also bears the name of spikenard, and probably was known from the earliest times under that appellation.

Calmet imagines, with great probability, that Solomon alludes to the two different species of nard in that passage of the Song: "Camphire with spikenard, spikenard with saffron." Why should this plant be twice named? No satisfactory reason, it must be admitted, can be assigned but one, that by the first nard the royal preacher meant the Syrian plant, with which he must have been well acquainted; and by the second, the Indian nard, or true spikenard. If this be admitted, the passage becomes clear and easy. Besides, the two words are differently pointed in the printed copies; and it deserves to be remarked, that the first term is in the plural, nardim, while the second term seems to be put absolutely, nard, or the nard, (in the singular number) with the crocus. These circum-

* Calmet, vol. 4.

stances greatly strengthen the conjecture, that different plants are intended in this passage, the false and the true spikenard.

The evangelist Mark, mentions the ointment under the name of spikenard, in the clearest manner: "There came a woman, having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard, very precious; and she brake the box and poured it on his head." This box was valued at more than three hundred pence (denarii)*; and John mentions a *pound* of ointment of spikenard *very costly*;—the house was filled with the odour of the ointment;—it was worth three hundred pence (denarii†). Here the precise quantity used on that occasion is determined—a pound; and the lowest value stated, which was *eight pounds fifteen shillings*, for Mark says it was worth more. From these circumstances, Calmet infers, "that this was not a Syrian production, or an ointment made from any fragrant grass growing in the neighbouring districts, but was a true *atar* of Indian spikenard, an unguent containing the very essence of the plant, and brought at a great expense from a remote country."

They made a perfume of high estimation with the blade, or spike of the nard, to which the words of the spouse seem to refer: "While the king sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof‡." From the term nard here being in the singular number, Calmet suggests the idea, that this spikenard was in the form of an essence in a small bag, or a number of sprigs of the fragrant grass, worn like a nosegay in the bosom. "It is certain," says he; "that the savour of her good ointments is mentioned, verse 3., as highly attractive; and that an *atar* of spikenard, used for perfume, might be intended, needs no proof; but if so, then we have this perfume in its artificial state alluded to, both in the Old and the New Testaments; and the passages which mention it, mutually illustrate each other."

* Mark xiv. 3, 5.

† John xii. 3.

‡ Song i. 12.

Millet.

This word occurs more than once in the sacred volume: Ezekiel calls it *duchan* or *dochan*; and the learned editor of Calmet thinks it is probably the holcus durra, which forms a principal food among the orientals. Its Latin name, millet, is supposed to derive from mille, that is, a thousand grains, in allusion to its extraordinary fruitfulness. It is made into bread, with camel's milk, oil, butter, and other unctuous substances, and is almost the only food eaten by the common people of Arabia Felix. Niebuhr found it so disagreeable, that he would willingly have preferred plain barley bread. This is certainly the reason that it was appointed to the prophet Ezekiel, as a part of his hard fare*.

Sesamum

Is cultivated every where in Arabia: it is called by the Egyptians *semsem*. Calmet imagines the prophet Isaiah refers to this grain in the phrase, "the appointed barley," which has so greatly perplexed interpreters. The original word is nisman (נִסְמַן), which Harmer would transform into *dochan*, which signifies millet. But unwilling to deviate so far from the text, Calmet is rather inclined to read sesamun, which varies in one letter only. The passage then would read—"he casts abroad the wheat, barley, and sesamum, in their places." It is more probable the term nisman is the real Niphal of saman, the same with the Hebrew verb shaman, to be fat or rich, and refers merely to the superior quality of the grain. This requires no change in the original text, which is always to be avoided as much as possible; it has also the advantage of being simple and easy, and of giving a sense equally natural and important.

Darnel, or Cockle,

Grows among corn, and is well known to the people of Aleppo. The seeds possess an intoxicating quality, and are

* Calmet, vol. 4.

therefore separated after threshing, by means of a van or sieve. In some parts of Syria, the plant is drawn up by the hand in the time of harvest, along with the wheat, and is then gathered out and bound up in separate bundles.

In the parable of the tares, our Lord states the very same circumstances. They grew among corn; they were not separated by the reapers, but suffered to grow up together till harvest; they were then gathered from among the wheat with the hand, and bound up in bundles. It is therefore more than probable, that Darnel is the plant to which he alluded.

The Mandrake.

This plant is a species of melon, of which there are two sorts, the male and the female. The female mandrake is black, and puts out leaves resembling lettuce, though smaller and narrower, which spread on the ground, and have a disagreeable scent. It bears berries something like services, pale and of a strong smell, having kernels within like those of pears. It has two or three very large roots, twisted together, white within, black without, and covered with a thick rind. The male mandrake is called Morion, or folly, because it suspends the senses. It produces berries twice as large as those of the female, of a good scent, and of a colour approaching towards saffron. Its leaves are large, white, broad, and smooth, like the leaves of the beech-tree. The root resembles that of the female, but is thicker and bigger. Both the smell and the taste are pleasant; but it stupifies those that use it, and often produces phrenzy, vertigo, and lethargy, which, if timely assistance is not given, terminate in convulsions and death. It is said to be a provocative, and is used in the east as philters. The orientals cultivate this plant in their gardens, for the sake of its smell; but those which Reuben found, were in the field, in some small copse of wood perhaps, or shade, where they had come to maturity before they were found. If they resemble those of Persia rather than those of Egypt, which are of a very inferior quality, then we see their value, their supe-

riority, and perhaps their rarity, which induced Rachel to purchase them from the son of Leah*.

The Gourd

Produces leaves and branches resembling those of the garden cucumber. Its fruit is shaped like an orange, of a light white substance when the rind is taken off, and so bitter, that it has been called *the gall of the earth*†. It is not eatable; but is a very fit vessel for flagons, being light, capacious, and smooth, frequently a foot and a half in diameter.

The gourd of Jonah is generally allowed to be the el-keroa or ricinus, a plant well known in the east; “it grows very high, and projects many branches and large leaves. In a short time it reaches a considerable height: its stem is thick, channelled, distinguished by many knots, hollow within, branchy at top, of a sea green colour: its leaves are large, cut into seven or more divisions, pointed and edged, of a bright, blackish, shining green. Those nearest the top are the largest; its flowers are ranged on their stem like a thyrus: they are of a deep red, and stand three together.”

“With this description agrees the account in the prophet, of its rising over his head to shelter it; for this plant rises eight or nine feet, and is remarkably rapid in withering, when decayed or gathered‡.”

The gourd which defended the prophet, is said to have been prepared by the Lord. We have no reason to conclude from this expression, that the Almighty created it for the special purpose; he only appointed, and promoted its growth in that particular spot, raising its stem and expanding its branches and leaves according to the ordinary laws of nature, till it formed a most refreshing shade over the place where the angry seer waited the fulfilment of his prediction. “We may conceive of it,” says Calmet, “as an extraordinary one of its kind, remarkably rapid in growth, remarkably hard in its stem, remarkably

* Taylor's edition of Calmet, vol. 2 and 4.

† 2 Kings iv. 39.

‡ Calmet, vol. 4, Exp. Ind.

vigorous in its branches, and remarkable for the extensive spread of its leaves, and the deep gloom of their shadow; and after a certain duration, remarkable for a sudden withering and uselessness to the impatient prophet."

The worm which struck the gourd, has been considered rather as a maggot than a worm. It was, no doubt, of the species appropriate to the plant; but of what particular species, is uncertain. Like the gourd, it was also prepared by Jehovah, to indicate its extraordinary size and vigour; that it acted by his commission; and that the effect of its operations was so rapid and decisive, as clearly to discover the presence of the divine energy.

The Juniper.

The juniper is mentioned more than once in our translation of the Scriptures; but the opinions of learned men are much divided, concerning the shrub or tree to which the inspired writers allude. The gadha or gadhat, a species of tree very like the tamarisk, which grows in the sandy deserts, resembles in more than one instance, the juniper in our translation. It flourishes in the burning wild; its wood is extremely proper to burn into charcoal, which has the property of long retaining fire; on which account, it is carried into the cities and sold for fuel. The camel is very fond of its leaves, although they frequently affect him with pains in his bowels; and under its shade, the wolf so commonly lurks, that it has become a proverb among the Arabs, "The wolf is near the gadha*." But from these circumstances it cannot be determined with certainty, whether the gadha of the roving Arab be the same with the juniper.

The Hebrew word for the plant to which we give the name of juniper, is rothem, from the verb ratham, to bind or tie, on account of the toughness or tenacity of its twigs. In Parkhurst, it is the genista or Spanish broom, which eminently possesses the character of tenacity. Pliny remarks, that the twigs of the

* De Herbelot, Bib. Orient.

genista are so tough, that the ancient Romans used them for withs to bind their cattle.

“ Genista quoque vinculi usum præstat.”

The statement of the natural historian is confirmed by the poet of Italy :

“ Molle siler, lentæque genistæ.” *Geor. 2. l. 12.*

So great is their flexibility that the Italians still weave them into baskets. The genista, it must be granted, affords but a poor shelter to the weary traveller from the intense heat of an oriental sky ; while the prophet Elijah, exhausted with a long and precipitate flight, found a refreshing shade under the spreading branches of the rothem*. But the remark applies with equal, if not greater force to the juniper, which in this country never rises above the stature of an humble shrub. The words of the inspired writer are by no means inconsistent with this circumstance : “ But Elijah went a day’s journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree.—And as he lay and slept under the juniper tree, behold then an angel touched him and said unto him, arise and eat.” The passage seems to import, that the prophet, unable to proceed, embraced the shelter of a genista, which, according to Bellonius, grows in the desert, for want of a better ; as the prophet Jonah was glad to screen himself from the oppressive heat of the sun under the frail covert of a gourd. But in reality, the genista in the oriental regions, interposed with considerable effect between the parched wanderer and the scorching heat of the sun. The shepherds of Italy often reclined under the shade of its branches.

“ — Salices humilesque Genistæ

Aut illæ pecori frondem, aut pastoribus umbras

Sufficiunt.”

Geor. b. 2. l. 434.

But in the warm regions of Asia, the humilis genista, the lowly shrub of Virgil, probably grows much larger and higher than even in the genial soil and climate of Italy.

The roots of the rothem, or juniper as we translate the term,

* 1 Kings xix. 4.

were used in the days of Job for food, by the poorest of the people: "For want and famine they were solitary: fleeing into the wilderness, in former time desolate and waste. Who cut up mallows by the bushes, and juniper roots, (ve shoreslh rethamim), for their meat." But this circumstance determines nothing; for neither the roots of juniper, nor of genista, nor of any other tree in those deserts, can afford a salutary nourishment to the human body: nor can any modern instance be found, of the roots of juniper or genista being eaten for food. Job only says it was done in times of extreme want, when the famished poor are frequently compelled to prolong their miserable existence by the use of the most improper substances. It is certain that the shoots, the leaves, the bark, and the roots of other shrubs and trees, have been eaten among many nations, in times of scarcity and famine. Thus for instance, Herodotus informs us, that when the routed army of Xerxes was fleeing from Greece, such of them as could not meet with better provision, were compelled by hunger to eat the bark and leaves, which they stripped off all kinds of trees. The hungry Laplander devours the tops and bark of the pine; and even in Sweden, the poor in many places are obliged to grind the bark of birch trees to mix with their corn, to make bread in unfavourable seasons*.

The royal Psalmist mentions the coals of the rethamim as affording the fiercest fire of any combustible matter that he found in the desert, and therefore the fittest punishment for a deceitful tongue; "What shall be given unto thee, or what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue? Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper:" The wrath of God, like a keen and barbed arrow from the bow of the mighty, shall pierce the strongest armour, and strike deep into the hardest heart, and like the fierce and protracted flame of the juniper, shall torment the liar with unutterable anguish.

Now, if it be the property of juniper long to retain the

* Harnier, Parkhurst.

fire, or to emit a vehement flame, it is not less the characteristic of *genista*: for according to Geierus, as quoted by Parkhurst, the Spanish *genista*, or *rethama lignis aliis vehementius scintillet, ardeat, ac strideat*, sparkles, burns, and crackles more vehemently than any other wood. The people of Israel in their journeys through the wilderness, came to a place called Rithma, probably from the great quantity of *rethamim* growing there. In traversing the same inhospitable wilds, Thevenot and his fellow travellers were compelled to gather broom for warming themselves, and boiling their coffee. This greatly corroborates the opinion of Parkhurst, that the *rothem* of the Old Testament is not properly the juniper, but Spanish broom; but although his opinion is extremely probable, our imperfect acquaintance with the natural history of those remote countries, renders it impossible to reach a satisfactory conclusion.

The shade of the *rothem*, (whether it be translated the juniper, or the *genista*), is supposed by some writers of great eminence to be noxious. This circumstance is mentioned only for the purpose of vindicating the prophet Elijah, from the imputation of wishing to put an end to his existence, when he fled for his life into the wilderness. He went on that occasion, a day's journey into the wilderness of Beersheba; and sitting down under a juniper tree, fatigued with his journey, and oppressed with grief, he fell asleep, after having requested God that he might die.

Grotius imagines, that the prophet rested under the shade of the juniper, because he was now become careless of his health; and he cites a passage from Virgil, as a proof that the shadow of this tree is noxious.

“*Solet esse gravis cantantibus umbra :*

Juniperi gravis umbra ; nocent et frugibus umbræ.”

Ecl. 10. l. 75.

But his conclusion will not follow; because Virgil evidently means, that the shades of evening are hurtful; not the shade of the juniper, except by night, when the shade of every tree

is thought by natural historians to be injurious to health. If the shade of the juniper were noxious, it would be noxious to every one, and not merely to singers. And how could it be hurtful to the fruits? They do not grow under it, and are therefore not exposed to its deleterious influence. It is easy to see how the shades of evening are hurtful to the fruits; but how the shade of the juniper should be noxious to them, is quite inconceivable. The poet indeed, expressly mentions the danger of reposing under the shade of that tree; but the true reason seems to be this: the juniper being an ever-green, and its leaves growing very close, it extends in the evening a more damp and chilly shade, than perhaps any other tree in that part of Italy. So little afraid were the orientals of its noxious qualities, that some of their most magnificent cities were embosomed in a grove of juniper trees*. This is an incontestible proof that they did not find their effluvia deadly, nor even injurious to health.

Another commentator of considerable celebrity, supposes, on the contrary, that Elijah reposed himself under the juniper tree, for the more effectual preservation of his health; the shade of it being, according to him, a protection from serpents; and alleges, that it was the custom of the people in that part of the world, to guard themselves by such precautions against the bite of these venomous reptiles. But this opinion seems to be no less visionary than the allegation of Grotius. Travellers often recline beneath the shade of a spreading tree; but in all their narratives, the reason assigned by Peter Martyr is never once mentioned. According to Dioscorides, the glowing embers of juniper wood, not the shade of the living tree, possessed the power of driving away those unwelcome visitants.

The most obvious reason is in this, as in most instances, the best; Elijah flying into the wilderness from the rage of Jezebel, became oppressed with the burning heat of the day, and the length of the road, and cast himself down under the shade

* Shaw's Trav.

of the first shrub that he found. Or if it was in his power to make a choice, he preferred the juniper for the thickness of its covert, without any apprehension of its possessing either a deleterious quality, or the power of defending him from the bite of the serpent: he chose it merely for its shade, where, under the watchful and efficacious protection of Jehovah, his own God, and the God of his people, he sunk into quiet repose. To suppose that he repaired to the shade of the juniper with the view of ruining his health, and shortening his days, is quite inconsistent with every trait in the character, and every action in the life of that holy man. So far from harbouring the horrible idea of suicide, although certainly tired of life, he prayed to his God to remove him from the disgusting scene of idolatry and oppression, into his immediate presence; a sure proof he neither expected nor desired that favour from the noxious exhalations of the juniper. To this may be added, that the question is not yet decided, whether it was a juniper, or what particular species of tree it really was, under the friendly covert of which, the weary and afflicted prophet sought repose.

The Myrtle.

With the cedar and the shitta tree, the myrtle is conjoined in several parts of Scripture: "I will plant in the wilderness, the cedar and the shitta tree, and the myrtle and the oil tree*." In our ungenial climates, the myrtle is a lowly shrub, and in appearance, unequally classed with the cedar and the olive. But the seeming impropriety vanishes when it is considered, that the prophet intends to describe a scene of varied excellence and beauty: "I will adorn the dreary and barren wilderness with trees famed for their stature, and the grandeur of their appearance, the beauty of their form, and the fragrance of their odour." Again; "instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle tree; and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign, that shall not be cut off†."

* Isa. xli. 19.

† Ch. lv. 13.

These quotations both refer to the effect of the gospel, or the reign of Christ on the state of the world and the dispositions of mankind. They foretel the production of a moral paradise by the creative power of Jehovah, where nothing but sin and misery reigned before. The prophet Zechariah chooses the myrtle to express the beauty, the utility, and the low condition of the church; "a man seated on a red horse, was seen among the myrtle trees which were in the bottom of some valley*." This visionary scene, while it presents a just idea of the lowly and depressed state of the church, and suggests many pleasing reflections concerning her preservation and security under the protection of her Saviour, agrees with the aspect of nature in the east, where the groves of myrtle are frequently to be seen rising to a considerable height, although not so high as to conceal a man on horseback, especially from one advantageously placed on a rising ground, as the prophet in vision seems to have been.

The aspect of nature to which these Scriptures refer, is beautifully displayed by the glowing pencil of Savary, in his letters on Greece. Describing a scene at the end of the forest of Platanea, he says; "Myrtles intermixed with laurel roses grow in the valleys to the height of ten feet. Their snow white flowers, bordered within with a purple edging, appear to peculiar advantage under the verdant foliage. Each myrtle is loaded with them, and they emit perfumes more exquisite than those of the rose itself: they enchant every one, and the soul is filled with the softest sensations." The pine, the fir, and the box, contribute also to the beauty and richness of oriental scenery; and are sometimes referred to by the sacred writers: but the allusions are few and unimportant.

The Mustard Tree.

The account which our Lord gave of the mustard tree, recorded in the gospel of Matthew, has often excited the ridicule of unbelievers, or incurred their pointed condemnation: "The

* Zech. i, 18.

kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field ; which is indeed the least of all seeds, but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches of it*." We behold no such mustard trees in this country, say the enemies of revelation, therefore the description of Christ must be erroneous. But the consequence will not follow, till it is proved that no such trees exist in any part of the world. This parable of the mustard tree was delivered in a public assembly, every individual of which was well acquainted with it ; many of them were the avowed enemies of our Lord, and would have gladly seized the opportunity of exposing him to the scorn of the multitude, if he had committed any mistake. The silent acquiescence of the scribes and Pharisees affords an irrefragable proof that his description is perfectly correct. They knew that the same account of that plant more than once occurs in the writings of their fathers.

In the Babylonish Talmud, a Jewish Rabbi writes, that a certain man of Sichein had bequeathed him by his father three boughs of mustard ; one of which broken off from the rest yielded nine kabs of seed, and the wood of it was sufficient to cover the potter's house. Another Rabbi, in the Jerusalem Talmud says, he had a stem of mustard in his garden, into which he could climb as into a fig tree. After making every reasonable allowance for the hyperbolical terms in which these Talmudical writers indulged, they certainly referred to real appearances in nature ; and no man will pretend that it was any part of their design to justify the Saviour's description. But, the birds of the air might certainly lodge with ease among the branches of a tree that was sufficiently strong to sustain the weight of a man. The fact asserted by our Lord is stated in the clearest terms by a Spanish historian, who says, that in the province of Chili, in South America, the mustard grows to the size of a tree, and the birds lodge under its shade, and build their nests in its branches.

* Matt. xiii. 31, 32.

CHAP. II.

THE WOODS AND TREES OF PALESTINE.

THE land of promise cannot boast, like many other countries, of extensive woods; but considerable thickets of trees and of reeds sometimes arise to diversify and adorn the scene. Between the lake Samochonites and the sea of Tiberias, the river Jordan is almost concealed by shady trees from the view of the traveller. When the waters of the Jordan are low, the lake Samochonites is only a marsh, for the most part dry and overgrown with shrubs and reeds. The lake of Tiberias is bordered with reeds; while the banks of the river on both sides, are shaded with planes, alders, poplars, tamarisks, and reeds of different kinds. In these thickets, among other ferocious animals, the wild boar seeks a covert from the burning rays of the sun. Large herds of them are sometimes to be seen on the banks of the river, near the sea of Tiberias, lying among the reeds, or feeding under the trees*. Such moist and shady places are in all countries the favourite haunts of these fierce and dangerous animals. Those marshy coverts are styled woods in the sacred Scriptures; for the wild boar of the wood is the name which that creature receives from the royal Psalmist: "The boar out of the wood doth waste it; and the wild beast of the field doth devour it†." The wood of Ephraim, where the battle was fought between the forces of Absalom and the servants of David, was probably a place of the same kind; for the sacred historian observes, that the wood devoured more people that day, than the sword devoured‡. Some have supposed the meaning of this passage to be, that the soldiers of Absalom were destroyed by the wild beasts of the wood; but it can scarcely be supposed, that in the reign of David, when the land of promise was crowded with inhabitants, the

* Pococke and Sandy's Trav,

† Psalm lxxx, 13.

‡ 2 Sam, xviii, 8.

wild beasts could be so numerous in one of the woods as to occasion such a destruction. But if their numbers had been so great, we know that, unless they had been detained contrary to their natural dispositions by the miraculous interposition of Heaven, for the purpose of executing his righteous vengeance on the followers of Absalom, intimidated by the approach of two hostile armies, and still more by the tumult of the battle, they must have sought their safety in flight, rather than have staid to devour the discomfited party. Besides, we do not hear that one of David's men perished by the wood: were they miraculously preserved; or, were the wild beasts able to distinguish between the routed army and the victors, and politic enough to side with the strongest? We are not without an express revelation, or at least without necessity, to suppose a miraculous interposition. The scene of the expeditions which the Turks undertook against Faccardine, the famous emir, in the fifteenth century, was chiefly in the woods of mount Lebanon, which all travellers agree furnish a retreat to numerous wild beasts, yet the historian says not one word of either Turk or Maronite being injured by them, in his whole narrative. Absalom himself was the only person who properly perished by the wood; being caught by the hair of his head, of which he had been so vain, in the branches of a large oak, where Joab found him and thrust him through with a dart. But, supposing the wood of Ephraim to have been a morass covered with trees and bushes, like the haunts of the wild boar near the banks of Jordan, the difficulty is easily removed. It is certain that such a place has more than once proved fatal to contending armies, partly by suffocating those who in the hurry of flight inadvertently venture over places incapable of supporting them, and partly by retarding them till their pursuers come up and cut them to pieces. In this manner, a greater number of men than fell in the heat of battle, may be destroyed. The archbishop of Tyre informs us, that one of the Christian kings of Jerusalem lost some of

his troops in a marshy vale of this country, from their ignorance of the paths which lead through it, although he had no enemy to molest his march. The number of those who died was small; but in what numbers would they have perished, may we suppose, had they been forced to flee, like the men of Absalom, before a victorious and exasperated enemy? Lewis II. king of Hungary, lost his life in a bog in his own kingdom, in the sixteenth century: and according to Zozimus, Decius the Roman emperor perished in a fen, with his whole army. It may therefore, be justly concluded, that Absalom's army perished neither by the trees of the wood, like their guilty leader, nor by the wild beasts which occupied its recesses; but by the deceitful quagmires with which it abounded*.

After the woods of Palestine, the trees mentioned in Scripture, of which they were composed, are entitled to our attention. Enough has already been said of the cedar, in illustrating the passages of Scripture which allude to the mountains of Lebanon. Next in order, as equal in strength and majesty, is

The Oak,

The general character of which, is sufficiently familiar. In the oriental regions, this stately and umbrageous tree seems to reach a height, equal, if not superior to that which it commonly attains in these parts of the world, and to extend a deep and refreshing shade, to screen the fainting inhabitant of those regions from the scorching rays of the sun. The orientals loved to recline under the protecting shade of the oak, as the ancient Roman under the covert of the spreading beech. The patriarch Abraham spread his tent under the oak of Mamre, and planted a grove of this tree for the accommodation of his numerous household. Beneath the wide extended arms of the oak, Joshua set up the tabernacle of the Lord, that the congregation might with comfort perform the public services of religion†. Under an oak, Jacob hid the idolatrous images found in his family. The Jews and other nations frequently buried their

* Harmer's Obser.

† Josh. xxiv. 26.

dead under the oak, that the mourner might be screened from the fierce heat, when he came according to their custom, to weep at the grave. For a similar reason the idolater set up his idol under its shade, that he might indulge his mistaken raptures as long as he chose, without inconvenience. The worship of the Druids wherever introduced, was conducted under the shade of the thickest oaks; and in Greece, the dubious oracles of Jupiter were uttered from the centre of the dark and solemn grove. The prevalence of a similar practice in Syria, we learn from the prophecies of Ezekiel: "Then shall ye know that I am the Lord, when their slain men shall be among their idols, round about their altars, upon every high hill, in all the tops of the mountains, and under every green tree, and under every thick oak; the place where they did offer sweet savour to all their idols*."

The durable wood of this tree, was chosen by the infatuated idolater, for the substance of his god: "He taketh the cypress and the oak, which he strengthens for himself, among the trees of the forest†:" hence it appears, that this majestic tree was held sacred, and even honoured with the highest religious veneration, in times of very remote antiquity. The Druids held nothing more sacred, than the oak, and the mistelto which grows upon its arms. They chose groves of oak on their own account, and never performed any of their sacred rites, without the leaves of those trees. They regarded the mistelto, which grew on their favourite tree, as sent from heaven, and as a sign, that God himself had chosen it for the scene of his worship. The mistelto is indeed a very extraordinary plant, not to be cultivated in the earth, but always growing upon some tree. It seems to prefer the branches of the oak or the apple. This plant, however, was very seldom found; but when found, was ever treated by the Druids and their disciples, with great ceremony. They distinguished it by a name, which in their language signifies,

* Ezek. vi. 13.

† Isa. xlv. 14.

“The curer of all evil ;” and having duly prepared their feasts and sacrifices under the tree, they bring two white bulls, whose horns are then for the first time tied. The priest dressed in a white robe, ascends the tree, and with a golden pruning hook, cuts off the mistelto, which is received in a white sheet. Then they sacrifice the victims, praying that God would bless his own gift to those on whom he has bestowed it*. Is it possible, says Mr Parkhurst, for a Christian to read this account, without thinking of him who was the desire of all nations ; of the man whose name is the Branch ; who had indeed no father on earth, but came down from heaven ; was given to heal all our ills ; and, after being cut off by the divine counsel, was wrapped in fine linen, and laid in the sepulchre for our sakes. The mistelto was a sacred emblem to other nations, especially to the ancient inhabitants of Italy. The golden branch of Virgil, without which, no one can return from the infernal regions, seems in allusion to the same plant.

“ ——— Latet arbore opaca
Aureus et foliis et lento vimine ramus,
Junoni infernæ dictus sacer——
Sed non ante datur telluris operta subire,
Auricomos quam quis decerpserit arbore fœtus.”

The Shitta Tree.

Concerning the shitta tree, mentioned by the prophet Isaiah with the cedar and the myrtle, different opinions are entertained by commentators. The name is derived from the Hebrew verb shata, to decline or turn to and fro, having for the plural, shittim. It is remarkable for being the wood of which the sacred vessels of the tabernacle were made. The Seventy interpreters generally render it by the term *ασπις*, incorruptible. Theodotion, and after him the Vulgate, translate it by Spina, a thorn. The shittim wood, says Jerome, resembles the white thorn in its colour and leaves, but

* Pliny's Nat. Hist.

not in its size; for the tree is so large, that it affords very long planks. The wood is hard, tough, smooth, without knots, and extremely beautiful. This kind of wood grows only in the deserts of Arabia; but in no other part of the Roman empire. In another place he remarks, it is of an admirable beauty, solidity, strength, and smoothness. It is thought he means the black acacia, the only tree found in the deserts of Arabia. It is so hard and solid, as to become almost incorruptible. Its wood has the colour of the Lotos tree; and so large, that it furnishes planks twelve cubits long. This tree is very thorny, and even its bark is covered with very sharp thorns; and hence it perhaps had the Hebrew name *shata*, from making animals decline or turn aside by the sharpness of its spines. The interpretation now given, seems to be confirmed by the following remark of Dr Shaw: "The acacia being by much the largest and the most common tree of these deserts, we have some reason to conjecture, that the *shittim* wood, of which the several utensils of the tabernacle were made, was the wood of the acacia. This tree abounds with flowers of a globular figure, and of an excellent smell; which is another proof of its being the *shitta* tree of the Scriptures, which, in the prophecies of Isaiah, is joined with the myrtle and other sweet-smelling plants." Besides, we have no reason to conclude, that the people of Israel possessed any species of wood for making the utensils of the tabernacle, but what they could procure in the desert; but the desert produces none in the quantity required, except the acacia. In one place they found seventy-two palm trees: but the sacred writer distinguishes them by their vulgar name; therefore they could not be the same tree; nor is the palm, which is a soft spongy wood, at all fit for the purpose,—for the nature of the utensils, as the ark of the testimony and the mercy seat, required wood of a fibre the hardest, the most beautiful and durable which could be found, had it been in their power to make a choice; and these are the very characters of the acacia. To these im-

portant qualities may be added, the fragrant odour emitted by this wood, which to orientals who delight in rich perfumes, must have been a powerful recommendation. But if the acacia was perfectly suited to the purpose of Moses, and if the desert produces no other, as Dr Shaw declares, the shittim wood mentioned in the Scriptures must be the acacia of the natural historian.

The Sycamore.

The sycamore is a large and spreading tree, and one of the most common in Egypt and Palestine. Its grain and texture are very coarse and spongy ; which is the reason that the people of Israel, yielding to the suggestions of pride and vanity, proposed to substitute in their place the finest trees : “ The sycamores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars*.” The sycamore buds late in the spring, about the latter end of March, and is therefore called by the ancients, *arborum sapientissima*, because it thus avoids the nipping frosts to which many other trees are exposed †. It strikes its large diverging roots deep into the soil ; and on this account, our Lord alludes to it as the most difficult to be rooted up and transferred to another situation : “ If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamore tree, be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea, and it should obey you ‡.” The extreme difficulty with which this tree is transferred from its native spot to another situation, gives to the words of our Lord a peculiar force and beauty. The stronger and more diverging the root of a tree, the more difficult it must be to pluck it up, and insert it again so as to make it strike root and grow ; but far more difficult still to plant it in the sea, where the soil is so far below the surface, and where the restless billows are continually tossing it from one side to another ; yet, says our Lord, a task no less difficult than this to be accomplished, can the man of genuine faith

* Isa. ix. 10.

† Hasselquist.

‡ Luke xvii. 6.

perform with a word ; for with God nothing is impossible, nothing difficult or laborious.

The sycamore forms the middle link in the vegetable kingdom, between the fig and the mulberry ; and partakes, according to some natural historians, of the nature of both. This is the reason the Greeks call it *συκαμωρος*,—a name compounded of *συκος* a fig tree, and *μωρος* a mulberry. It resembles the fig tree in the shape and size of its fruit ; which grows neither in clusters, nor at the end of the branches, but by a very singular law, sticking to the trunk of the tree. Its taste is much like that of the wild fig.

It may seem strange that so inferior a tree as the sycamore, should be classed by the Psalmist with the choicest vines, in his ode on the plagues of Egypt : “ He destroyed their vines with hail, and their sycamore trees with frost*.” Many other trees, it may be supposed, might be of much greater consequence to them ; and in particular, the date, which, on account of its fruit, the modern Egyptians hold in the highest estimation†. But it ought to be remembered, that several trees which are now found in Egypt, and highly valued, might not then be introduced. Very few trees at present in Egypt, are supposed to be natives of the country. If this idea be just, the sycamore and the vine, might at that early period be in reality the most valuable trees in that kingdom. But, admitting that the sycamore was in respect of intrinsic properties or general utility, much inferior to some other trees which they possessed, accidental circumstances might give it an importance to which it had originally no claim. The shade of this umbrageous tree is so grateful to the inhabitants of those warm latitudes, that they plant it along the side of the ways near their villages ; and as a full grown sycamore branches out to so great a distance that it forms a canopy for a circle of forty paces in diameter, a single row of trees on one side of the way is sufficient. It is often seen stretching its arms over the houses, to screen the faint-

* Psalm lxxviii. 47.

† Maillet.

ing inhabitant from the glowing heats of the summer. This was a benefit so important to them, that it obtained a place in the divine promise: "They shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree*;" and to shew at once the certainty of the promise, and the value of the favour, it is repeated by another inspired prophet: "Ye shall call every man his neighbour under his vine and under his fig tree†." Now, it appears from the most authentic records, that the ancient Egyptian coffins, intended to preserve to many generations the bodies of departed relatives; the little square boxes which were placed at the feet of the mummies, enclosing the instruments and utensils in miniature which belonged to the trade and occupation of the deceased; the figures and instruments of wood found in the catacombs,—are all made of sycamore wood, which, though spongy and porous to appearance, has continued entire and uncorrupted for at least three thousand years. The innumerable barks which ply on the river and over all the vale, in the time of the inundation, are also fabricated of sycamore wood. But besides the various important uses to which the wood was applied, the sycamore produces a species of fig upon which the people almost entirely subsist, thinking themselves well regaled, when they have a piece of bread, a couple of sycamore figs, and a pitcher filled with water from the Nile‡.

The Egyptians are not the only people to whose palate the fruit of the sycamore is agreeable; Hasselquist, the Swedish traveller, found it very grateful to the taste; he describes it as soft, watery, and sweetish, with something of an aromatic flavour§. The fruit of this tree comes to maturity several times in a season, according to some writers not fewer than seven times; although prolific figs, or such as are perfectly formed, ripen only once. Thus, the sycamore produces a fresh crop of agreeable, and not unwholesome fruit, seven times a year, for the use of those that dwell under its shadow; a boon which perhaps no other tree in the garden of Nature bestows on man.

* Mic. iv. 4.

† Zech. iii. 10.

‡ Norden's Trav.

§ Harmer.

Nor is it a dangerous or a laborious task to gather the figs; they seem to have so little hold of the parent tree, that "if they be shaken, they shall even fall into the mouth of the eater*." The disposition of the fig tree to part with her untimely or precocious figs, is noticed by John in the book of Revelation: "And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs when she is shaken of a mighty wind†." This accounts for the appointment of a particular officer in the reign of David, whose sole duty it was to watch over the plantations of sycamore and olive trees: "And over the olive trees and the sycamore trees that were in the low plains, was Baalhanan the Gederite‡." So valuable was the sycamore in the land of Canaan, during the reign of David, (from which undoubtedly may be inferred the high estimation in which it was held in every age,) that, in the commission of Baalhanan, the officer charged with its protection, it is joined with the olive, one of the most precious gifts which the God of nature has bestowed on the oriental nations. Hasselquist found the sycamore growing in great numbers in the plains and fields of Lower Egypt, which verifies the accuracy of the inspired writer; and it appears from the same traveller, that the olive delights in similar situations; for, in his journey from Jaffa to Rama, he passed through fine vales abounding with olive trees.

The sycamore buds in the latter end of March, and the prolific fruit ripens in the beginning of June. Pliny and other natural historians allege, that it continues immature till it is rubbed with iron combs, after which it ripens in four days. Is it not an operation of this kind to which the prophet Amos refers in the text which we translate, "I was a gatherer of sycamore fruit§?" The Septuagint seems to refer it to something done to the fruit to hasten its maturity; probably to the action of the iron comb, without the application of which, the

* Nah, iii. 12.

† Ch. vi. 13.

‡ 1 Chron. xxvii. 28.

§ Amos vii. 14.

figs cannot be eaten because of their intolerable bitterness. Parkhurst renders the phrase, a scraper of sycamore fruit; which he contends, from the united testimony of natural historians, is the true meaning of the original term. The business of Amos then, before his appointment to the prophetic office, was to scrape or wound the fruit of the sycamore tree, to hasten its maturity and prepare it for use. Simon renders it a cultivator of sycamore fruit, which is perhaps the preferable meaning; for it appears that the cultivation of this fig required a variety of operations, all of which, it is reasonable to suppose, were performed by the same persons. To render the tree fruitful, they scarified the bark, through which a kind of milky liquor continually distilled. This, it is said, causes a little bough to be formed without leaves, having upon it sometimes six or seven figs. They are hollow, without grains, and contain a little yellow matter, which is generally a nest of grubs. At their extremity, a sort of water collects, which, as it prevents them from ripening, must be let out. Amos, it is probable, was employed in these various operations; which has induced Simon and others to render the words, not a gatherer of sycamore fruit, but a dresser of the sycamore tree; which includes all the culture and attendance it requires.

The sycamore is a large spreading tree, sometimes shooting up to a considerable height, and so thick, that three men can hardly grasp the trunk. This unfolds the reason why Zaccheus climbed up into a sycamore tree, to get a sight of his Redeemer. The incident also furnishes a proof that the sycamore was still common in Palestine; for this tree stood to protect the traveller by the side of the highway.

The Mulberry.

It is doubtful whether the mulberry tree is once mentioned in the Scriptures. If Hasselquist may be credited, it scarcely ever grows in Judea, very little in Galilee, but abounds in Syria and mount Lebanon. Our translators have rendered the original term Baca, by mulberry, in two different passages:

“ And when David inquired of the Lord, he said, thou shalt not go up, but fetch a compass behind them, and come upon them over against the mulberry trees (Becaim); and let it be when thou hearest the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then thou shalt bestir thyself*.” And the words, Who passing through the valley of Baca, make it a pool; the rain also filleth the pools,—are in the margin, Who passing through the valley of mulberry trees†. The Seventy, in Chronicles, render it pear trees; in which they are followed by Aquila and the Vulgate. Some think Baca, in the eighty-fourth Psalm, is the name of a rivulet, which burst out of the earth, at the foot of a mountain, with a plaintive murmur, from which it derived its name. But it is more probable, that Baca is the name of some shrub or tree. Those who translate it the mulberry tree, to illustrate the passage in the Psalm pretend it grows best in the dry ground; but this seems to be unfounded. Marinus imagines, that Baca signifies the mulberry tree, because the fruit of the mulberry exudes a juice resembling tears. Parkhurst rather thinks that Baca means a kind of large shrub, which the Arabs likewise call Baca, and which probably was so named from its distilling an odoriferous gum. For Baca with an *aleph*, seems to be related to Bacah with a *hay*, which signifies to ooze, to distil in small quantities, to weep or shed tears. This idea perfectly corresponds with the description which Celsius has given of this valley. It is not, according to him, a place abounding with fountains and pools of water, but rugged and embarrassed with bushes and stones, which could not be passed through without labour and suffering; a striking emblem of that vale of thorns and tears, through which all believers must pass to the heavenly Jerusalem.

The great uncertainty among interpreters concerning the real meaning of the term Becaim, has induced Mr Harmer to hazard a conjecture, that the tree meant in this passage is the

* 2 Sam. v. 23, 24. See also 1 Chron. xiv. 14.

† Psalm lxxxiv. 6.

weeping willow. But this plant is not found in a dry sandy vale, where the thirsty traveller is compelled to dig for water, and to form cisterns in the earth, to receive the rain of heaven. In such a situation, we expect to find the pungent aromatic shrub distilling its fragrant gum; not the weeping willow, the favourite situation of which is the watery plain, or the margin of the brook.

The Palm Tree.

The palm tree is very common in Judea, and in the surrounding regions. The Hebrews call it Tamar תמר, and the Greeks φοινίξ, Phœnix. The finest palm trees grow about Jericho and Engeddi; they also flourish in great numbers along the banks of Jordan, and towards Scythopolis. Jericho is by way of distinction, called "the city of palm trees*." It seems indeed, to have been recognized as the common symbol of the Holy land; for Judea is represented on several coins of Vespasian, by a disconsolate woman sitting under a palm tree; and in like manner, upon the Greek coin of his son Titus, struck on a similar occasion, we see a shield suspended on a palm tree, with a victory writing upon it. The same tree is delineated upon a medal of Domitian, as an emblem of Neapolis or Naplosa, the ancient Sichem; and upon a medal of Trajan, it is the symbol of Sepphoris, the metropolis of Galilee. From these facts it may be presumed, that the palm tree was formerly much cultivated in Palestine. Several of them still grow in the neighbourhood of Jericho, which abounds with water, where the climate is warm, and the soil sandy; a situation in which they delight, and where they rise to full maturity. But at Jerusalem, Sichem, and other places to the northward, two or three of them are rarely seen together; and even these, as their fruit seldom or never comes to maturity, are of no further service than, like the palm tree of Deborah, to shade the dwellings of the parched inhabitants, or to supply them with branches at the solemn festival. The

* Deut xxxiv. 3.

present condition and quality of palm trees in Canaan, lead us to conclude, that they never at any time were either very numerous or fruitful in that country. The opinion that Phenice is the same with a country of date trees, does not appear probable; for if such a valuable plant had ever been cultivated in Palestine with success, it would have been cultivated down to the present times, as in Egypt and in Barbary. In these countries the traveller meets with large plantations of palm trees on the sea coast, as well as in the interior; although those only which grow in the sandy deserts of Sahara, and the regions of Getulia, and the Jereeda, bring their fruit to perfection. They are propagated chiefly from young shoots taken from the roots of full grown trees; which, if well transplanted and taken care of, will yield their fruit in the sixth or seventh year; while those which are raised immediately from the kernel, will not bear till about their sixteenth year. This method of raising the φοινῖξ or palm, and particularly the circumstance, that when the old trunk dies, young shoots are never wanting to succeed it, may have given occasion to the well known fable of the Phoenix, which perishes in a flame of her own kindling; while a young one springs from her ashes to continue the race.

The palm tree arrives at its greatest vigour about thirty years after being transplanted, and continues in full strength and beauty for seventy years longer, producing yearly fifteen or twenty clusters of dates, each of them weighing fifteen or twenty pounds. After this period it begins gradually to decline, and usually falls about the latter end of its second century. “Cui placet curas agere seculorum,” says Palladius, “de palmis cogitet conserendis.”

It requires no other culture and attendance, than to be well watered once in four or five days, and to have a few of the lower boughs lopped off when they begin to droop or wither. These, whose stumps or pollices, in being, thus gradually left upon the trunk, serve, like so many rounds of a ladder, to climb up the tree, either to fecundate, or to lop it, or to gather the fruit, are

quickly supplied with others, which gradually hang down from the crown or top, contributing both to the regular and uniform growth of this tall, knotless, and beautiful tree, and to its perpetual and delightful verdure.

It is usual with persons of better station, to entertain their guests on days of joyous festivity with the honey of the palm tree. This they procure by cutting off the head or crown of one of the more vigorous plants, and scooping the top of the trunk into the shape of a bason, where the sap in ascending lodges itself, at the rate of three or four quarts a day, during the first week or fortnight; after which the quantity daily diminishes, and at the end of six weeks or two months, the juices are entirely consumed, the tree becomes dry, and serves only for timber or firewood. This liquor which has a more luscious sweetness than honey, is of the consistence of a thin syrup, but quickly grows tart and ropy, acquiring an intoxicating quality, and giving by distillation an agreeable spirit,—the Araky of the natives, and the palm wine of the natural historian*.

The palm is one of the most beautiful trees in the vegetable kingdom; it is upright, lofty, verdant, and embowering. It grows by the brook or well of living water; and resisting every attempt to press or bend it downwards, shoots directly toward heaven. The chosen symbol of constancy, fruitfulness, patience, and victory; the more it is oppressed, the more it flourishes, the higher it grows, and the stronger and broader the top expands. To this majestic and useful tree, the child of God is compared in the holy Scriptures, with singular elegance and propriety. Adorned with the beauties of holiness, and rich in the mercies of the covenant, fruitful in good works and reposing all his thoughts in heaven, precious in the sight of God, and lovely in the view of every rational being capable of forming a just estimate of his character, he may well be said to flourish like the palm tree, and to grow like a cedar in Le-

* Shaw's Trav. vol. 1.

banon. "Planted in the house of the Lord, he shall flourish in the courts of our God. He shall still bring forth fruit in old age; he shall be fat and flourishing; to shew that the Lord is upright; that he is his rock; and there is no unrighteousness in him*." When the Saviour describes the comeliness and majesty of his church, he compares her by a very noble figure, to the lofty and tapering palm: "How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights; this thy stature is like to a palm tree, and thy breasts to clustres of grapes." Upon this, to denote his ardent desire of communion with his people, he compares himself to one who climbs the palm, to lodge among the branches, inhale their fragrance, and gather their fruit: "I said, I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof; now also, thy breasts shall be as clustres of the vine, and the smell of thy nose like apples†." The indignant prophet, when he ridiculed the dumb idols of the Gentile world, could not find a more appropriate simile, than the rigid upright growth of the palm, to express their unpliant and motionless frame, so unlike the agility of a man, much more the powerful activity of him who rides upon the cherub, and walks upon the wings of the wind: "They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not; they must needs be borne, because they cannot go‡." From the first clause it is evident, that he alluded also to the shape of their gods. Before the art of carving was carried to perfection, the ancients made their images all of a thickness, straight, having their hands hanging down and close to their sides, the legs joined together, the eyes shut with a very perpendicular attitude, and not unlike to the body of a palm tree; such are the figures of those antique Egyptian statues that still remain. The famous Greek architect and sculptor Dædalus, set their legs at liberty, opened their eyes, and gave them a freer and easier attitude§.

But according to some interpreters, and particularly Mr Park-

* Psalm xcii. 12.

† Song vii. 6, 7, 8.

‡ Jer. x. 5.

§ Diodor. Secul. as quoted by Calmet, vol. 2.

hurst, the inspired writer sometimes gives it a more honourable application ; selecting it to be the symbol of our blessed Redeemer, who himself bore our sins in his own body on the tree. The voice of antiquity ascribes to the palm, the singular quality of resisting a very great weight hung upon it, and of even bending in the contrary direction, to counterbalance the pressure. Of this circumstance, Xenophon takes notice in his *Cyropædia* ; *καὶ ὅτι πλεζόμενοι οἱ φοίνικες ὑπο βαρὺς ἀνω κνύσσονται* ; and indeed, palm trees when loaded with any weight, rise upwards, and bend the contrary way. The same observation was made by Plutarch. It has been already observed, that the Hebrew name of the palm tree is *Thamar* ; and in the Old Testament, we meet with a place in Canaan called *Baalthamar*, in honour, it is probable, of *Baal* or the sun, for many ages the object of universal veneration among the orientals ; and who had been worshipped there by the Canaanites under this attribute, as supporting the immense pressure of the celestial fluid on all sides, and sustaining the various parts and operations of universal nature in their respective situations and courses. The symbol of this support, stolen and perverted as usual from the sacred ritual, appears to have been a palm tree, which was also the symbol of support among the Greeks and Egyptians. With how much greater propriety is it, the appointed symbol of him who sustained the inconceivable pressure of divine wrath for his people, and was so far from being utterly depressed under such a load of sin and punishment, that he successfully endured all that the law and justice of his Father demanded, rose victorious over death and the grave ; and shall for ever, as these interpreters suppose, “ flourish like the palm tree, and grow or spread abroad like the cedar in Lebanon.” Hence, in the outer temple, (the symbol of *Jehovah incarnate*,) palm trees were engraved on the walls and doors between the coupled cherubs. And for this reason, the prophetess *Deborah* is supposed to have fixed her dwelling under a palm tree, emblematically to express her trust, not in the idolatrous *Asheroth*

or Blessers, at that time the abomination of Israel, but in the promised Messiah, who was to be made perfect through sufferings. At the feast of tabernacles, the people of Israel were to take branches of palm trees; at once to typify Jehovah's dwelling in our nature, and the spiritual support, which by this means, all true believers derive from him; and also, to ascribe to him as the Creator and Preserver of all things, in opposition to Baal or the sun, the honour of sustaining the operations of nature in producing and ripening the fruits of the earth. The feast of tabernacles was also the feast of ingathering; and every person in the least acquainted with the customs of oriental nations knows, that the palm was among idolaters, the chosen symbol of the sun, and consecrated to that luminary; and, that the temples erected to his honour through all the regions of the east, were surrounded with groves of palm trees, whose leaf, resembling in shape the solar beam, and maintaining a perpetual verdure, might continually remind the adoring suppliants, of the quickening influence and sustaining energy of their favourite deity.

The branches of this tree were also carried in the hands of conquering armies, and before the triumphal car of their commander, as emblems of victory. The reason assigned for the prevalence of this custom among the nations of antiquity, by Plutarch and Aulus Gellius, is the nature of the tree by which it so remarkably resists incumbent pressure. And it is probable, they carried palms in their hands on the celebration of victory, not without respect to Apollo or the sun, to whom they were consecrated. But the worshippers of the true God, in bearing palm branches after a victory, or in their solemn festivals, meant to acknowledge the divine Author of success and prosperity, and to carry forward their thoughts to the great conqueror of sin and death. These seem to have been the sentiments, which actuated the multitudes that accompanied the Saviour when he made his triumphant entrance into Jerusalem, before his death; they took branches of palm trees

and went forth to meet him; expressing, by these significant emblems, what they immediately began to utter in joyful acclamations: “Hosannah; blessed is the king of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord* ;” that is, save us, blessed is the Messiah that cometh in the name of the Father who sent him, and whose work he came to accomplish. In the same manner, the saints are represented in the book of Revelation, with palms in their hands; while they proclaim the meaning of the symbol in loud ascriptions of “Salvation to their God who sat on the throne, and unto the Lamb†.”

The Pomegranate

The pomegranate, the *Malus punica* of the Romans, the *ρῶα* or *ροα* of the Greeks, and the *Rimon* of the Hebrews, is a kind of apple tree, whose fruit is covered without, with a rind of a redish colour, and which, opening lengthwise, shews red grains full of juice resembling wine, with little kernels. The Hebrew term *Rimon*, which expresses both the tree and the fruit, from *Rama* to project, seems to have its name from the strong projection or reflection of light, either from the fruit or from the starlike flower with six leaves, or rays at the top of the apple. The Greek name *ρῶα*, which denotes the tree, and *ροισκος*, the fruit, by which the Seventy render the word *Rimon*, aim, perhaps at the same thing, being derived from *ρεω*, to flow. We learn from Dr Shaw, that August produces the first ripe pomegranates, some of which, are three or four inches in diameter, and of a pound weight. The pomegranate, or *malum Punicum*, as originally brought from Phenicia, was formerly numbered among the most delicious fruits which the earth produces‡. The high estimation in which it was held by the people of Israel, may be inferred from its being one of the three kinds of fruit brought by the spies from Eshcol, to Moses and the congregation in the wilderness§; and from its being specified by that rebellious people as one of the greatest

* John xii. 13, 14.

† Rev. vii. 9.

‡ Shaw's Trav.

§ Num. xiii. 23. and chap. xx. 5.

luxuries they enjoyed in Egypt, the want of which they felt so severely in the sandy desert. The pomegranate, classed by Moses with wheat and barley, vines and figs, oil olive and honey, was, in his account, one principal recommendation of the promised land*. But no circumstance more clearly proves the value which the orientals put upon this fruit, than the choice which Solomon makes of it to represent certain graces of the church: "Thy temples are like a piece of pomegranate within thy locks†;" and in the thirteenth verse, the children of God are compared to an orchard of pomegranates with pleasant fruits.

Three sorts of pomegranates are used in Syria, the sour, the sweet, and another of an intermediate taste, for the purpose of giving a grateful acidity to their sauces or liquids. A very refreshing draught, such as the Syrians use in hot weather, composed of wine mixed with the juice of the pomegranate, it would seem, the spouse proposed to make for her beloved: "I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate;" a delicious and cooling beverage to the parched inhabitant of the equatorial regions; or perhaps she means a species of wine made of pomegranate juice, which we learn from Chardin, is drunk in considerable quantities in the east, and particularly in Persia. Which of these is really intended, it is not easy to determine. Liquors of this kind are still very common in the east. Sherbet, which is a syrup, chiefly that of lemons mixed with water, is used by persons of all ranks ‡.

"I think," says Mr Harmer in a note, "it is highly probable, that in the time of remote antiquity, pomegranate juice was used in those countries where lemon juice is now used, with their meat, and in their drinks; and, that it was not till afterwards that lemons came among them. I know not how else to account for the mention of pomegranates, in describing the fruitfulness of the Holy land: they would not now, I think, occur in such descriptions; the juice of lemons and

* Deut. viii. 8.

† Song iv. 3.

‡ Dr Russel's Hist. of Aleppo.

eranges have at present almost superseded the use of that of pomegranates." But the opinion of this respectable writer, is opposed by no less an authority than Dr Russel, who spent many years in Syria, and wrote the natural history of that country. According to that able historian, lemons have by no means superseded the pomegranate; the latter is more easily preserved through the winter, and is often in cookery preferred to the lemon. In describing the fruitfulness of a country, the pomegranate would be mentioned; and it is diligently cultivated even where lemons are plenty. What Chardin calls Roubnar, he would not understand to be wine; Rab-al-nar is the inspissated juice of the pomegranate, or the juice of grapes preserved with sugar.

The brazen pomegranates which Solomon placed in the net work, over the crowns which were on the top of the two brazen pillars, appear to Parkhurst plainly to represent the fixed stars, strongly reflecting light on the earth and planets. And the artificial pomegranates which were ordered to be fixed on the skirt of Aaron's robe, were meant to represent those spiritual stars, even the children of God, who, by a light derived from the Sun of Righteousness, shine as lights in the world; and who, like the bells which accompanied the pomegranates, are continually to proclaim the perfections of him who called them out of darkness, into his marvellous light.

The Fig Tree.

The fig tree is very common in Palestine and the east. The ancient Hebrews gave it the name of *Thaena*, which signifies the tree of grief; because the upper side of the leaf is rough and prickly, fretting the parts of the human body to which it is applied, and causing pain. It was accordingly, say the Jews, with the leaves and pliant branches of this tree, that our first parents after the fall, twisted for themselves girdles or aprons, in token both of their shame and their desert. The wise economy of the great Creator, is admirably displayed in the natural character of this tree; it flourishes with the great-

est luxuriance in those stony and barren situations where almost nothing else will grow. This is confirmed by an observation of Columella: "*Ficum frigoribus ne serito, loca aprica, calculosa, glaceosa interdum et saxosa amat.*"

Although the fig tree delights in a rocky and parched soil, it contains a milky, or fat oily liquor; it is very fruitful; and, in the islands of the Archipelago, a single tree generally produces two hundred and eighty pounds of figs*. It ought not therefore to appear surprising, that the inspired writers bestow so many commendations on this valuable plant; and compare those nations and individuals that enjoy the highest degree of prosperity known in this world, to the man who reclines at his ease "under his vine and his fig tree†:" while they represent the failure and destruction of the fig tree, as one of the greatest public or private calamities: "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, - - yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation‡."

Figs are of two kinds, the boccore and the kermouse. The black and white boccore, or early fig, is produced in June; but the kermouse, the fig properly so called, which is preserved and made up into cakes, is rarely ripe before August. Shaw mentions a long dark coloured kermouse, which sometimes hangs upon the trees all the winter. For the kermouse in general continue a long time upon the tree before they fall off; while the boccores drop as soon as they are ripe, and, according to the beautiful allusion of the prophet Nahum, fall into the mouth of the eater the moment they are shaken. The prophecy in which the allusion occurs, is directed against Nineveh, at that time the mistress of the whole earth; a city strongly fortified and full of people. That proud metropolis promised, like Babylon, to sit a queen, and see no sorrow; to resign her greatness, her splendour, and her dominion, only when time shall cease to run. But, says the inspired prophet, all thy strong holds, without exception, shall be equally weak

* Tournefort's Trav.

† Mic. iv. 4.

‡ Hab. iii. 18.

and untenable before the wrath of Heaven; ready to fall, like the first ripe figs, which drop into the mouth of the eater when the tree is shaken with the gentlest hand, they shall yield to the first assault. Soon mature and soon destroyed, Nineveh shall be as completely swept from the face of the earth, as the first ripe fig is consumed by the devouring mouth of appetite or famine.

Dr Shaw remarks, that the fig tree does not properly blossom, or send out flowers, as we render the Hebrew verb *Thiphrah* *. It may rather be said to shoot out its fruit, which it does like so many little buttons with their flowers, small and imperfect as they are inclosed within them.

When our learned traveller visited Palestine, he found the boccore or early fig far from a state of maturity in the latter end of March; for, in the language of the evangelist, "the time of figs was not yet," or not till the middle or latter end of June. "The time" mentioned by the inspired writer, is supposed by some authors, to be the third year, in which the fruit of a particular kind of tree comes to perfection. But, if this species exist at all, it requires to be better known and more fully described, before it can be admitted to the honour of illustrating a text of Scripture. The remark of Dionysius Syrus, as translated by Dr Loftus, is more to the purpose: "It was not the time of figs," because, says he, it was the month Nisan, when trees yield blossoms, and not fruit. It frequently falls out in Barbary, however, and we need not doubt of the same thing taking place in the hotter climate of Palestine, that, according to the quality of the preceding season, some of the more forward and vigorous trees will occasionally yield a few ripe figs, six weeks or more before the full season. The fig trees in Canaan did certainly produce these early figs; for the prophet compares the beauty of Samaria to them; and to shew how premature and evanescent was the prosperity of that rich and powerful metropolis, he observes, that the people gathered

* Hab. iii, 17.

these figs, and eat them up as soon as they found them: "As the hasty fruit before the summer, which, when he that looketh upon it, seeth it, while it is yet in his hand, he eateth it up*." To point out the rapid increase of ancient Israel, and how much the Lord delighted in them, the prophet Hosea remarks, that He found Israel in the wilderness, as the first ripe in the fig tree at her first time†; and Jeremiah describes the genuine worshippers of Jehovah, under the figure of a basket which "had very good figs, even like the figs which are first ripe‡. Pliny mentions a species of this tree, which is always green, and always bearing fruit; some ripe, or very far advanced, according to the season, some in the bud or in the blossom§.

When the boccore draws nearer to perfection, then the summer fig, or kermouse (the same that are preserved), begin to be formed; they seldom ripen before August; at which time a third crop, or, as it may be called, the winter fig, appears. This is usually of a much longer shape, and darker complexion than the kermouse, hanging and ripening upon the tree, even after the leaves are fallen; and if the winter prove mild and temperate, is gathered as a delicious morsel in the spring. We learn from Pliny, that the fig tree was *bifera*, or bare two crops of figs, the boccore perhaps, and the kermouse; though what he relates afterwards would insinuate, that there was also a winter crop. "*Seri fructus per hiemem in arbore manent et æstate inter novas frondes et folici maturescunt.*" "*Ficus alterum edit fructum,*" says Columella, "*et in hiemem seram differet maturitatem.*" It is well known, that the fruit of these prolific trees always precedes the leaves; and consequently, when our Saviour saw one of them in full leaf, he might, according to the common course of nature, very justly look for fruit, and haply find some boccores, if not some winter figs still adhering to the branches||. But the difficulty admits of

* Isa. xxviii. 4.

† Hos. ix. 10.

‡ Jer. xxiv. 2.

§ Pliny b. 13. c. 8. and b. 15. ch. 18.

|| Shaw's Trav.

another solution, which some may perhaps reckon more satisfactory. It has already been stated on the authority of Pliny, that one species of fig tree is always green, and always bearing fruit, some ripe or very far advanced, according to the season, some in the bud or in the blossom. The statement of this renowned ancient, is confirmed in general by Norden, who gives the same account of the sycamore. This tree, he informs us, rises to "the height of a beech, and bears its fruit in a manner quite different from other trees. It has them on the trunk itself, which shoots out little sprigs, in form of a grape stalk, at the end of which grows the fruit, close to one another, most like branches of grapes. The tree is ALWAYS GREEN, and bears fruit SEVERAL TIMES in the year, WITHOUT OBSERVING ANY CERTAIN SEASONS; for I have seen some sycamores that have fruit two months after others." Such, it is reasonable to suppose, was the fig tree which incurred the malediction of our Lord.—It stood by the side of the public road, leading from Bethany to Jerusalem; it was therefore a wild fig or sycamore, for this was the only species which they planted in such situations. It is always green, (with leaves unquestionably); but he might discern the leaves of the tree, and its general verdure, long before it was clear to observation, whether any figs adhered to the trunk or not. It bears fruit several times in the year, without observing any certain seasons; our Lord then did not expect this tree to bear its fruit out of the proper season; for he knew it disregarded the usual time of figs, and produced at any season of the year. And if he blasted this tree on account of its barrenness, it was no man's private property, for it grew by the way side; but if it had belonged to some person, it was still the property of the Saviour; for "all things were made by him, and for him, and by him all things consist;" and may not the Lord of all dispose of his own as he pleases? Should any be disposed to inquire, Did not our Lord, who is the Omniscient, distinctly know the real state of that particular fig tree? It may be replied, as God

he certainly did ; but as man he might not : for in this last character he did not know all things. He who did not as man know the day of judgment, might not know that the fig tree which he saw at a distance, was covered only with leaves. Nor is it certain, that as man he was ignorant of the real state of that tree ; he does not say, that he expected to find figs upon it, but the evangelist, who says, “ Seeing a fig tree afar off, having leaves, he came if haply he might find any thing thereon.” This might well be the language of his conduct, the natural inference which a spectator would draw from his confessing that he was hungry, and going up to the fig tree ; as on the road to Emmaus, after his resurrection, he made as if he would have gone further, though he really intended, as the event proved, to turn in with the two disciples, and make himself known to them in the breaking of bread. Besides, our Lord had a more important object in view, than to satisfy the cravings of hunger ; he meant to shew his disciples, by a lively emblem, what God had a right to demand from the Jewish people, the fruits of righteousness, according to the privileges they had for many ages enjoyed ; what they had become—barren and cumberers of the ground ; and what they might assuredly look for—the curse of Heaven, which should dry up the sources of their prosperity, and prepare them as fuel for the devouring flame.

So valuable is the fig tree in the land of Canaan, and so high is the estimation in which it is held, that to bark and kill it, is reckoned among the severest judgments which God inflicted upon his offending people : “ For a nation is come up upon my land, strong, and without number, whose teeth are the teeth of a lion, and he has the cheek teeth of a great lion : he has laid my vine waste, and barked my fig tree ; he has made it clean bare, and cast it away ; the branches thereof are made white *.” The prophet alludes in these words, to the destructive progress of the locust, which, with insatiable greediness, devours the leaves and bark of every tree on which

* Joel i. 6, 7.

it lights, till not the smallest portion of rind is left, even on the slenderest twig, to convey the sap from the root, and leaves it white and withering in the sun, for ever incapable of answering the hopes of the husbandman. Such were the people of Israel, delivered by Jehovah, for their numerous and inveterate transgressions, into the hands of their cruel and implacable enemies.

The Vine.

The vine is a tree familiarly known even in these northern and ungenial climes. Of this valuable plant, the species are numerous, and strongly marked.

In the vales near Jordan, in the neighbourhood of Jericho, not far from the Dead sea, is found, growing in great abundance, the vine of Sodom, a plant, from the fields around that devoted city, which produces grapes as bitter as gall, and wine as deadly as the poison of a serpent. This deleterious fruit is mentioned by Moses in terms which fully justify the assertion: "For their vine is of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah; their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter; their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps." It is probably the wild vine, a species of gourd, which produces the *coloquintida*, a fruit so excessively bitter that it cannot be eaten; and when given in medicine, proves a purgative so powerful, as to be frequently followed by excoriation of the vessels and hemorrhage. It seems therefore to have been early, and not without reason, considered as poisonous. It was of this wild vine the sons of the prophets ate; and its instantaneous effect, together with their knowledge of its violent action, easily accounts for their alarm: "And it came to pass as they were eating (of the pottage which had been mixed with the gourd), that they cried out, and said, O thou man of God, there is death in the pot, and they could not eat *." Another species of wild vine, but of a milder character, which grows in Palestine, near the high ways and hedges, is the *Labrusca*. Its fruit is a very small grape,

* 2 Kings iv, 39.

which becomes black when ripe; but often it does not ripen at all. These are the wild grapes to which the prophet compares the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah: "And he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes*." They are also the sour grapes to which another inspired prophet alludes, when he predicts the destroying judgments that were coming upon his rebellious people: "In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge. --- Every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge†."

One species of vine is not less distinguished by the luxuriance of its growth, than by the richness and delicacy of its fruit. This is the Sorek of the Hebrews, which the prophet Isaiah has chosen to represent the founders of his nation—men renowned for almost every virtue which can adorn the human character: "My well beloved has a vineyard in a very fruitful hill, and he planted it with Sorek, or the choicest vine‡." It is to this valuable species that Moses refers, in his prophetic benediction addressed to Judah; and the manner in which he speaks of it is remarkable: "Binding his foal unto the vine, and his asses' colt unto the choice vine." In some parts of Persia, it was formerly the custom to turn their cattle into the vineyards after the vintage, to browse on the vines, some of which are so large, that a man can hardly compass their trunks in his arms§. These facts clearly shew, that agreeably to the prediction of Moses, the ass might be securely bound to the vine, and without damaging the tree by browsing on its leaves and branches. The same custom appears, from the narratives of several travellers, to have generally prevailed in the Lesser Asia. Chandler observed, that in the vineyards around Smyrna, the leaves of the vines were decayed or stripped by the camels, or herds of goats, which are permitted to browse upon them after the vintage. When he left Smyrna on the thirtieth of September, the vineyards were already bare; but

* Isa. v. 2.

† Jer. xxxi. 29, 30.

‡ Isa. v. 2.

§ Chardin

when he arrived at Phygela, on the fifth or sixth of October, he found its territory still green with vines; which is a proof, that the vineyards at Smyrna must have been stripped by the cattle, which delight to feed upon the foliage.

This custom furnishes a satisfactory reason for a regulation in the laws of Moses, the meaning of which has been very imperfectly understood, which prohibits a man from introducing his beast into the vineyard of his neighbour. It was destructive to the vineyard before the fruit was gathered; and after the vintage, it was still a serious injury, because it deprived the owner of the fodder, which was most grateful to his flocks and herds, and perhaps absolutely requisite for their subsistence during the winter. These things considered, we discern in this enactment, the justice, wisdom, and kindness of the great Legislator: and the same traits of excellence might no doubt be discovered in the most obscure and minute regulation, could we detect the reason on which it is founded.

But, if the vine leaves were generally eaten by cattle after the vintage was over, how, says Mr Harmer, "could the prophet, Isa. xxxiv. 4., represent the dropping of the stars from heaven, in a general wreck of nature, by the falling of the leaf from the vine? If they were devoured by the cattle, they could not fall." The answer is easy: the prophet refers to the character of the vine leaf, not to any local custom; nor is it reasonable to suppose, that the leaves of every vineyard were so regularly and completely consumed, that the people had never seen them showering from the branches by the force of the wind, or the nipping colds in the close of the year. The beauty and fertility of the Sorek, or choice vine, add great force and elegance to the comparison in the gospel of John: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman:" I am the root, fountain, and head of influence, whence my people and members derive life, grace, and every spiritual blessing; and my Father orders all things concerning those who believe in me, by uniting them to me as branches are engrafted into

the vine ; by visiting and defending, supporting and purifying them continually, to make them fruitful in every good work to do his will.

The land of Egypt never produced a sufficient quantity of wine to supply the wants of its inhabitants : but still it contained many vines, although it could not boast of extensive and loaden vineyards. The vines of Egypt are conjoined by the Psalmist, with the sycamores, in his triumphal song on the plagues which desolated that country, and procured the liberation of his ancestors : “ He destroyed their vines with hail, and their sycamore trees with frost*.” This was to the people of Egypt a very serious loss ; for the grape has been in all ages a principal part of the viands, with which they treated their friends. Norden was entertained with coffee and grapes by the aga of Essauen ; and when Maillet resided in that country, the natives used the young leaves of their vines even more than the fruit. A principal article of their diet consists in minced meat, which they wrap up in small parcels in vine leaves, and laying thus one leaf upon another, they season it according to the custom of their country, and make of it one of the most delicate dishes presented on their tables. The remainder of the vintage they convert into wine, of so delicious a taste and flavour, that it was carried to Rome in the days of her pride and luxury, and esteemed by epicures the third in the number of their most esteemed wines. The use of wine being prohibited by the Mohammedan law, very little is manufactured at present ; but it seems, in ancient times, to have been produced in much greater abundance. In the reign of the Pharaohs, it was certainly made in considerable quantities for the use of the court, who probably could procure no such wine from other countries, nor were they acquainted with such liquors as the great now drink in Egypt ; and consequently the loss of their vines, as the sacred writer insinuates, must have been considerable †.

* Ps. lxxviii. 47.

† Harmer, vol. 4. n. 6.

The grapes of Egypt are said to be much smaller than those which grow in the land of Canaan. Dandarini, though an Italian, seems to have been surprised at the extraordinary size of the grapes produced in the vineyards of Lebanon. They are as large as prunes, and, as may be inferred from the richness and flavour of the wines for which the mountains of Lebanon have been renowned from time immemorial, of the most delicious taste. To the size and flavour of these grapes, brought by the spies to the camp in the wilderness, the Italian traveller, little versed, it should seem, in the history of the Old Testament, imputes the ardour with which the people of Israel prosecuted the conquest of Palestine. The magnificent cluster which the spies brought from Eshcol, was certainly fitted, in no common degree, to stimulate the parched armies of Israel to deeds of heroic valour; but their kindling spirit was effectually damped by the report of the spies, who were intimidated by the robust and martial appearance of the Canaanites, the strength of their cities, and the gigantic stature of the sons of Anak.

The grapes produced in the land of Egypt, although very delicious, are extremely small*; but those which grow in the vineyards of Coelo Syria and Palestine, swell to a surprising bigness. The famous bunch of Eshcol required the strength of two men to bear it. This difference sufficiently accounts for the surprise and pleasure which the people of Israel manifested, when they first beheld, in the barren and sandy desert, the fruits which grew in their future inheritance. The extraordinary size of the grapes of Canaan, is confirmed by the authority of a modern traveller. In traversing the country about Bethlehem, Doubdan found a most delightful valley full of aromatic herbs and rose bushes, and planted with vines, which he supposed were of the choicest kind: it was actually the valley of Eshcol, from whence the spies carried that prodigious bunch of grapes to Moses, of which we read in the book of Numbers. That

* Norden.

writer, it is true, saw no such cluster, for he did not visit that fruitful spot in the time of the vintage; but the monks assured him, they still found some, even in the present neglected state of the country, which weighed ten or twelve pounds.

The vineyards of Canaan produce grapes of different kinds; some of them are red, and some white, but the greater part are black. To the juice of the red grape, the sacred writers make frequent allusions: "Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine fat *?" — "In that day, sing ye unto her a vineyard of red wine: I the Lord do keep it †." It is, therefore, with strict propriety, the inspired writer calls it "the blood of the grape," a phrase which seems intended to indicate the colour of the juice, or the wine produced from it: "Thou didst drink the pure blood of the grape ‡." The allusions in Scripture to the method of making wine, and the various utensils used in the process, belong to another part of this work.

The Olive Tree.

The olive tree is very common in Judea; and like the vine, it is of two kinds, the wild and the cultivated. The latter is of a moderate height; its trunk is knotty, its bark smooth, and of an ash colour; its wood is compact and yellowish; the leaves are oblong, and bear a striking resemblance to those of the willow, of a darkish green on the upper, and white on the under side. Dr Chandler found the olive in full bloom on the sixth of May, only one day's journey from Marathon in Greece. There he and his party dined under an olive tree, laden with pale yellow flowers; but in another part of the country, on the Saronic gulf, he found the olive in full blossom so late as the end of June. The flowers grow in bunches, each flower being of one piece, widening upwards, and dividing into four parts. The fruit is also oblong and plump; it is first green, then pale, and then black when it is fully ripe. The flesh of the fruit encloses a hard stone, full of an oblong seed. The

* Isa. lxiii. 2.

† Ch. xxvii. 2.

‡ Deut. xxxii. 14.

wild olive differs from this, in being smaller in all its parts. It is famed particularly for its oil, which it produces in great abundance.

To this valuable tree, the sacred Scriptures abound in references; and these, it is remarkable, have given considerable pain to an ingenious traveller, because the verdure of the olive did not equal his expectations. "The fields," observes Mr Sharpe, "and indeed the whole of Tuscany, are in a manner covered with olive trees; but the olive tree does not answer the character I had conceived of it: the royal Psalmist and some of the sacred writers, speak with rapture of the green olive tree, so that I expected a beautiful green; and I confess to you I was wretchedly disappointed to find its hue resembling that of our hedges when they are covered with dust. The olive tree may possibly delight in the barren district of Judea, but undoubtedly will disgust a man accustomed to English verdure."

This objection shews the necessity of attending to minute, and even seemingly trifling circumstances mentioned in the holy Scriptures. The solution which Mr Sharpe proposes, cannot be admitted. Judea is not, even in its present uncultivated state, so destitute of verdure, as to make a tree, which looks as if it were covered over with dust, an object capable of charming, by the vivid colour of its leaves, the eyes of the beholder. The supposition is still less admissible, when the reference in the sacred text, is to times when every spot was diligently cultivated by a skilful and industrious race of husbandmen. The true solution of the difficulty is to consider the word translated *green*, not as descriptive of colour, but of vigour, freshness, or some other property. In the prophecies of Daniel, our translators render the word *flourishing*; for no man can imagine, that when Nebuchadnezzar said, "I was at rest in my house, and *green* in my palace," (as it is in the Hebrew) he referred to colour. The proper meaning of the term, indeed, is vigorous and flourishing as a tree, without respect to colour. In this sense it is obviously used by Moses: "Ye

shall utterly destroy all the places wherein the nations which ye shall possess, served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green, or fresh and spreading tree *." The psalmist uses it in the same sense: "I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away, and lo, he was not; yea I sought him, but he could not be found †." When the Psalmist observes, "I shall be anointed with green oil," (where the original word is the same,) we are not to suppose he means oil of a green colour, for what advantage could he derive from that circumstance? Nor can it be shewn that oil of a green colour, was ever an object of special desire to the people of the east. Our translators, therefore, properly render the phrase, "I shall be anointed with *fresh* oil." Or perhaps the holy Psalmist may allude to that precious fragrant oil, with which it was the custom to anoint kings and princes on the day of their accession to the throne. Mr Harmer thinks it refers to medicated oil, to which a fragrant odour is imparted by the infusion of aromatic herbs. In his opinion, which is by no means improbable, the greater part of the oil which the orientals used in anointing their bodies, was rendered more or less fragrant, else it would hardly have answered the purpose, which was to correct the unpleasant effluvia which the heat of the climate often excited. On this account, it became extremely necessary to the enjoyment of life; which is the reason that the prophet threatened his offended people in these terms: "Thou shalt sow, but thou shalt not reap; thou shalt tread the olives, but thou shalt not anoint thee with oil: and sweet wine, but shalt not drink wine ‡." In these passages, the epithet plainly refers to freshness and vigour; and in the same manner, it must be understood in the text to which Mr Sharpe alludes: "I am like a green olive tree in the house of God." This interpretation is supported by the version of the Seventy, where it is rendered *καταλασπος*; and the Vulgate, in which it is translated *fruc-*

* Deut. xii. 2.

† Ps. xxxvii. 35.

‡ Mic. vi. 15.

tifera, fruitful. If we therefore render the passage according to the proper meaning of the term, "I am like a fruitful or vigorous olive tree in the house of God," the difficulty vanishes; the inspired text contains nothing inconsistent with the natural history of that valuable plant*. The beauty of the olive tree, mentioned in other parts of Scripture, consists not in the colour of its leaves, but in the spread of its branches. This remark is justified by these words of the prophet: "His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon†." Thus the disappointment of Mr Sharpe, of which he so feelingly complains, arose, not from the misrepresentations, or overcharged colouring, of the sacred writers, but merely from his not understanding the sense of their language.

The olive, according to Maillet, grows with remarkable luxuriance in Egypt; while Pococke affirms, that the region about Arsinoe, is the only part of that country which naturally produces it, and that it was cultivated by art in the gardens of Alexandria. The produce of a few olive trees, the greater part of which were the reward of painful industry, must have furnished but a scanty supply of oil to a people that reckoned it among the greatest comforts of life; that used it in great quantities in their cookery; for their lamps, which must have been very numerous in those ages, when the vale of Egypt, through all its extent, swarmed with inhabitants; and for their illuminations, which are still frequent and splendid, especially when the Nile begins to overflow his banks, and inundate their fields. To these modes of consumption, must be added the custom which universally prevails in this country, of keeping lamps burning the whole night in all the apartments which they occupy. If these things are duly considered, the opinion of Maillet, who resided many years in Egypt, will appear extremely probable, that more oil was consumed in this country than in any other on the face of the globe.

Syria, on the contrary, is a land in which olives abound, and

* Harmer, vol 3, p. 257.

† Hos. xiv. 6.

particularly that part of it which the people of Israel inhabited. This explains the reason why the Jews, when they wished to court the favour of their neighbours, the Egyptians, sent them a present of oil. The prophet thus upbraids his degenerate nation for the servility and folly of their conduct: "Ephraim feedeth on wind, and followeth after the east wind; he daily increaseth lies and desolation: and they do make a covenant with the Assyrians, and oil is carried into Egypt*." The Israelites, in the decline of their national glory, carried the produce of their olive plantations into Egypt, as a tribute to their ancient oppressors, or as a present to conciliate their favour, and obtain their assistance, in the sanguinary wars which they were often compelled to wage with the neighbouring states.

The olive may be justly considered as one of the most valuable gifts which the beneficent Creator has bestowed on the human family. The oil which it yields, forms an important article of food; it imparts a greater degree of pliancy to the limbs, and agility to the whole body; it assuages the agonizing pain, and promotes, by its sanative influence, the cure of a wound; it alleviates the internal sufferings produced by disease; it illumines, at once, the cottage and the palace; it cheers, by the splendour of its combustion, the festive meeting; it serves to expel the deadly poison of venomous reptiles; and it mingled, perhaps, from the first of time, by the command of heaven, with many of the bloodless oblations which the people of God presented at his altar. In these various and important uses, we may, perhaps, discover the true reason that the dove of Noah was directed, by God himself, to select the olive leaf from the countless variety which floated on the subsiding waters of the deluge, or bestrewed the slimy tops and declivities of Ararat, as the chosen symbol of returning peace and favour. From the creation of the world, the fatness of this tree

* Hos. xii. 1.

signally displayed the divine goodness and benignity; and since the fall of man, it symbolizes the grace and kindness of our heavenly Father, and the precious influences of the Holy Ghost, in healing the spiritual diseases of our degenerate race, and in counteracting the deadly poison of moral corruption. Hence, the people of Israel were commanded to construct their booths at the feast of tabernacles, partly with branches of olive; and all the nations of the civilized world were secretly directed, by the over-ruling providence of heaven, to bear them in their hands as emblems of peace and amity. The olive is mentioned as the sign of peace, by both Livy and Virgil, in several parts of their works, but one instance from the latter shall suffice.

“Tum pater Æneas puppi sic fatur ab alta
Paciferæque manu ramum pretendit olivæ.”

Æn. b. 8. l. 116.

The celebrated navigator, Captain Cook, found that green branches, carried in the hands, or stuck in the ground, were the emblems of peace, universally employed and understood by the numerous and untutored inhabitants of the South Sea islands. The origin of a custom, thus received and religiously observed, by nations dwelling on opposite sides of the globe, who never had the smallest intercourse with one another, must be sought for near the beginning of time, when the inhabitants of our earth, forming but one family, lived under the gentle sway of their common parent.

Dr Chandler, indeed, is of opinion, that the idea of reconciliation and peace was not associated with the olive branch till ages long posterior to the deluge. The olive groves, he argues, are the usual resort of doves, and other birds, that repair to them for food; and thus endeavours to find a natural connection between the dove of Noah and the olive leaf. The olive might, he thinks, be the only tree which had raised its head above the subsiding waters, near the place where the ark was floating, although it is only of a middling height; but if

the dove saw a great number of other trees above the water, the habits of the bird naturally led it to the olive plantation for shelter and food, in preference to all others.

But the greater part of this reasoning avowedly rests upon mere assumption; and although the olive grove may be the favourite retreat of the dove, how are we to account for the olive branch being chosen by almost every nation, from the remotest times, for the symbol of reconciliation and peace? It is far more probable, that the dove was directed by the finger of God, to prefer the olive leaf, or a sprig of olive leaves, as being the symbol of peace with which Noah was already acquainted, or that it might, in future, be the token of reconciliation between God and his offending creatures, and between one nation and another.

The Apple Tree.

In Canaan, and the circumjacent regions, the apple tree is of no value; and, therefore, seems by no means entitled to the praise with which it is honoured by the spirit of inspiration. The inhabitants of Palestine and Egypt import their apples from Damascus, the produce of their own orchards being almost unfit for use. The tree then, to which the spouse compares her Lord in the Song of Solomon, whose shade was so refreshing, and whose fruit was so delicious, so comforting, so restorative, could not be the apple tree, whose fruit can hardly be eaten: nor could the apple tree, which the prophet mentions with the vine, the fig, the palm, and the pomegranate, which furnished the hungry with a grateful repast, the failure of which was considered as a public calamity, be really of that species: "The vine is dried up, the fig tree languisheth, the pomegranate tree, the palm tree, also the apple tree, even all the trees of the field are withered; because joy is withered away from the sons of men *" M. Forskall says, the apple tree is extremely rare, and is named *tyffah* by the inhabitants of Palestine. In deference to his authority, the learned editor of

* Joel i, 12.

Calmet, with every disposition to render the original term by the *citron*, is inclined to revert again to the apple. But if, as Forskall admits, the apple tree is extremely rare, it cannot, with propriety, be classed with the vine, and other fruit-bearing trees, that are extremely common in Palestine and Syria. And if it grow "with difficulty in hot countries," and requires even the "assiduous attention" of such a monarch as Solomon, before it could be raised and propagated, an inspired writer certainly would not number it among the "trees of the field," which, as the phrase clearly implies, can live and thrive without the fostering care of man.

Bishop Patrick, in his commentary on the Song, supposes that the word *Thephucheem*, translated apples, denotes any kind of fruit which emits a fragrant odour, as the apple, the orange, the citron, the peach; but the justness of this remark may be questioned. To these, and other fruits, it is true, the Romans gave the common name of apples, only adding an appropriate epithet to distinguish them from one another; but the Hebrew writers do not seem to have followed this rule. The pomegranate certainly was its peculiar name; and the spouse, in the passage under consideration, evidently means a particular species of trees by this term, since she prefers them to all the trees of the wood.

It now remains to inquire what particular species of trees is denoted by the term *Thephucheem*. It occurs in six different passages of Scripture; and in them all, save one, is plainly given as the appropriate name to one of the noblest trees in the garden of nature: "As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons; I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste*." The fruit of this tree is represented in another part of the same book, as emitting a delightful fragrance: "I said I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof; now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the

* Song, ii. 3.

vine, and the smell of thy nose like apples*.” So delicious and powerful is their odour, that it revives the fainting spirits, and invigorates the languid frame: “Stay me with flaggons, comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love†.” The colour of this valuable fruit resembles burnished gold: “A word fitly spoken, is like apples of gold in pictures of silver‡.” These circumstances all correspond with the account which various writers have given of the citron. It must be admitted that they are equally applicable to the orange and the lemon tree; but it is to be remembered, that the most eminent natural historians doubt much whether these last were known to the ancients; while it is universally admitted, that with the first, they were familiarly acquainted. We learn, from Josephus, that the Jews, at the feast of tabernacles, pelted Alexander Jannæus with the citrons which they carried in their hands, according to the law. This anecdote clearly proves that the citron flourished in the orchards of Judea, several generations before the birth of our Lord; and it is, with much probability, supposed to have been well known in that country long before.

The Citron.

The citron is a large and beautiful tree, always green, perfuming the air with its exquisite odour, and extending a deep and refreshing shade over the panting inhabitant of the torrid regions. Well then might the spouse exclaim: “As the citron tree among the trees of the wood; so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.” A more beautiful object can hardly be conceived, than a large and spreading citron, loaded with gold-coloured apples, and clothed with leaves of the richest green. Maundrell preferred the orange garden, or citron grove at Beroot, the palace of the emir Facardine, on the coast of Syria, to every thing else he met with there, although it was only a large quadrangular plot of ground.

* Song, vii.

† Ch. v.

‡ Prov. xxv. 11.

divided into sixteen smaller squares: but the walks were so shaded with orange trees, of a large spreading size, and so richly adorned with fruit, that he thought nothing could be more perfect in its kind, or, had it been duly cultivated, could have been more delightful. When it is recollected that the difference between citron and orange trees, is not very discernible, excepting by the fruit, both of which, however, have the same golden colour, this passage of Maundrell's may serve as a comment on the words of Solomon, quoted in the beginning of the section.

The Almond.

The almond tree, so frequently mentioned in the sacred writings, was called by the Hebrews shakad, from a verb which signifies to awake, or watch; because it is the first tree which feels the genial influences of the sun, after the withering rigours of winter. It flowers in the month of January, and in the warm southern latitudes, brings its fruit to maturity in March. To the forwardness of the almond, the Lord seems to refer in the vision with which he favoured his servant Jeremiah: "The word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Jeremiah, what seest thou? And I said, I see a rod of an almond tree. Then said the Lord unto me, Thou hast well seen: for I will hasten my word to perform it;" or rather, "I am hastening, or watching over my word to fulfil it*." In this manner, it is rendered by the Seventy, ἐγγιγγοῦσα ἐγὼ ἐπι: and by the Vulgate, Vigilabo ego super verbum meum. This is the first vision with which the prophet was honoured; and his attention is roused by a very significant emblem of that severe correction with which the Most High was hastening to visit his people for their iniquity; and from the species of tree to which the rod belonged, he is warned of its near approach. The idea which the appearance of the almond rod suggested to his mind, is confirmed by the exposition of God himself: "I am watching over, or on account of my word to fulfil it;" and this

* Jer. i. 11, 12.

double mode of instruction, first by emblem, and then by exposition, was certainly intended to make a deeper impression on the mind, both of Jeremiah and the people to whom he was sent.

It is probable, that the rods which the princes of Israel bore, were scions of the almond tree, at once the ensign of their office, and the emblem of their vigilance. Such, we know from the testimony of Scripture, was the rod of Aaron; which renders it exceedingly probable, that the rods of the other chiefs were from the same tree: "And Moses spake unto the children of Israel, and every one of their princes gave him a rod apiece, for each prince, according to their fathers' houses, twelve rods; and the rod of Aaron was among their rods --- and behold the rod of Aaron, for the house of Levi, was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds *."

The almond rod of Aaron, in the opinion of Parkhurst, which was withered and dead, and by the miraculous power of God, made to bud, and blossom, and bring forth almonds, was a very proper emblem of him who first arose from the grave; and as the light and warmth of the vernal sun seems first to affect the same symbolical tree, it was with great propriety, that the bowls of the golden candlestick were shaped like almonds. The hoary head is beautifully compared by Solomon to the almond tree, covered in the earliest days of spring with its snow white flowers, before a single leaf has budded: "The almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail †." Man has existed in this world but a few days, when old age begins to appear; sheds its snows upon his head; prematurely nips his hopes, darkens his prospects, and hurries him into the grave.

Balsam Trees,

Amyris, Opobalsamum, called by the Arabians, *Aba scham*, literally, the father of smell, or very sweet scented. M. Fors-

* Num. xvii. 6—8.

† Eccl. xii. 5.

kall describes it as a middle sized tree, the branches widely spreading.

“*Amyris, Kafal*. This plant yields a most fragrant smell; and the pulp of the green berry, on being wounded, distils a white balm.

“The wood *kafal* constitutes a great part of commerce; and is brought to Egypt, where earthen vessels for carrying water are impregnated with the smoke of it, in order to contract a flavour of which this nation is very fond. The gum of this tree is a purging medicine.

“There are two other trees only known to me by name, as the *Schadjeret el muir*, that is, *tree of myrrh*; the other, *Chadasch*: which resemble those already described, if we may rely on my informers.

“*Amyris, Kataf*, which closely resembles the *kafal*, is said by the Arabs in the rainy month, (called Charif,) to swell, and at a proper time, to shed a red sweet-smelling powder, which the women of the country (*Abu Arisch*), where it is found in great plenty, sprinkle on their heads, or which they use to wash themselves with.

“The fruit of the *el-caja*, which grows in the mountains of Yemen, whose flowers resemble those of the *citron*, is mixed with those fragrant essences with which the Arabian women wash their heads.”

These interesting facts may throw some light on a text which is involved in much obscurity, and which interpreters have found it very difficult to explain. When the spouse rose from her bed to open to her beloved, her hands dropped myrrh (balsam), and her fingers sweet-smelling myrrh on the handles of the lock *. In this remark, she seems to allude rather to a liquid than a powder; for the word rendered dropped, signifies to distil as the heavens or the clouds do rain, or as the mountains are said to distil new wine from the vines planted there, or as the inverted cups of lilies shed their roscid or

* Song v. 5.

honey drops. The same term is figuratively applied to words or discourse, which are said to distil as the dew, and drop as the rain *; but still the allusion is to some liquid. As a noun, it is the name of *Stacte* or *myrrh*, distilling from the tree of its own accord without incision.

Again, the word rendered sweet-smelling, signifies passing off, distilling or trickling down; and therefore, in its present connection, more naturally refers to a fluid, than to a dry powder. If these observations be just, it will not be difficult to ascertain the real sense of the passage.

When the spouse rose from her bed, to open the door of her apartment, she hastily prepared to receive her beloved, by washing herself with *myrrh* and water; or according to an established custom in the East, by anointing her head with liquid essence of *balsam*: a part of which, in either case, might remain on her hands and fingers, and from them trickle down on the handles of the lock.†

CHAP. III.

INSECTS.

THE allusions of Scripture to the animated parts of nature, are numerous and important. The insect tribes, the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fishes of the sea, all are made to contribute their share in illustrating or adorning the page of inspiration. We shall begin with those creatures which occupy the lowest place in the scale of living existence.

In Scripture, the term *reptile* is often used to denote every animal which cannot be classed among fishes, birds, or larger quadrupeds. Thus, among the reptiles, Moses in the law, classes the mole, and other animals of the smallest size, whe-

* Deut. xxxii. 2.

† Taylor's *Calmet*, vol. 4. *Natural Hist.*

ther they creep upon their belly like worms, or have four feet as the locust, or are multipeds as the scolopendra. To these he adds the winged insect, the bee, the fly, and others of the same order. Hence, that renowned lawgiver, divided all reptiles into two classes; those that have blood, and those that have no blood, but only a humour analogous to it.

Three terms are employed in his writings to express the reptile, רמש, Remes, שרץ, Sheretz, and זחל, Zahal. The first signifies any creature that moves without rising from the ground; that creeps or crawls upon the land, or swims in the water: it designates every animal capable of motion, which either has no feet, or those so short, that it rather creeps than walks. The second term alludes in a particular manner, to the extraordinary fecundity of the reptile tribes, from a root which signifies to produce abundantly. The last is a name which both land and water reptiles bear, from the slowness of their motion. But in these illustrations, it is proposed to follow the usual division into insects and reptiles, and of course, to begin with the former.

The Fly.

This minute insect, which the Greeks call Oestrum, and the Latins, Asilus, sparkles like fire when it is on the wing, and is equally formidable by the severity of its sting, and the intolerable pain with which its bite is attended. So great was the terror which it inspired, that the heathen nations had particular gods, whose province it was to defend them from its attacks. This was the proper charge of Baalzebub, the lord of the fly, as the name denotes, who was adored at Ekron in the land of the Philistines. Those patriotic men, who had found means to deliver their native city from this terrible scourge, were elevated by their too grateful townsmen to the rank of deities, and worshipped in temples erected to their honour. These formidable insects themselves, incredible as it may appear, were actually worshipped in many places, either to mitigate their rage, or because they were supposed to be sacred

to the deity. At Actium, where stood the temple of Apollo, an ox was sacrificed to the Oestrum; and if Ælian be worthy of credit, they worshipped a deity called Deus Musca, under the characteristic symbol of a fly. But as this curious subject more properly belongs to another branch of the discussion, and will again occur, it would be improper to enlarge upon it here.

All the writers of antiquity agree in their descriptions of this terrible insect. The puncture made by its proboscis, which the skin of no animal is able to resist, is attended with the most exquisite pain. Struck by the Oestrum, the bull forsakes the meadow, regardless of the herd and the exertions of his keepers to restrain his flight, and runs in furious distraction over the fields, till exhausted with suffering, fatigue, and hunger, he sinks to the ground and expires. The whole herd, alarmed by its distant hum, has been known to abandon their pastures, and seek their safety in precipitate flight. In Cyrene and Egypt, it never passes the line which separates the cultivated part of the country from the desert; and generally confines its ravages to certain districts. Acquainted with these circumstances, the shepherds on its first approach, remove their flocks and herds into the neighbouring deserts, where it is never known to come, till the season of its devastation is over, when they return in peace and safety to their former pastures*. A similar account is given by the prince of Latin poets, in the third book of his *Georgics*. "About the groves of Silarus and Alburnus, verdant with ever-green oaks, abounds a flying insect which the Romans name Asylus, and the Greeks in their language, have rendered Oestron, armed with a sharp sting, humming harsh; with which whole herds affrighted, fly different ways through the woods: The sky is furiously shook with bellowings, and the woods and banks of dry Tanagrus." And he concludes his description of the implacable rage with which it persecutes the herd, with these well known lines:

* Bruce's Trav.

“Hoc quondam monstro horribiles exercuit iras
Inachiae Juno pestem meditata juvencae.” *l.* 146.

And by Homer, who represents the suitors of Penelope as flying through the hall like oxen persecuted by the oestrus.

οἱ δὲ φοβόντο κατὰ μέγαρον, βοὲς ὡς ἀγέλαιαι
ταῖς μὲν τ' αἰολοὺς οἰστροῖς ἐφορμηθεὶς ἐδόννησεν. *Odyss.* χ *l.* 299.

But its attacks are not confined to the herd; it assails the weary pilgrim with equal fury, piercing with great pain every part of his body which remains uncovered. A most violent burning tumor follows the punctures which it makes in the skin; and the distressed wanderer appears as if infected with leprosy. Nor is it almost possible for him to guard against the bite of this troublesome creature, by covering his head and neck with a veil*. This statement accounts for the strong propensity in the degenerate Israelites, and the ancient inhabitants of Canaan, to worship Baal or Belzebub, the lord of the fly. The oestrus was in their estimation, as it appears to have been in the opinion of the Romans, an instrument of vengeance in the hand of God. It was, in the fable, commissioned to punish Io, and compel her to wander as a fugitive over the face of all the earth. When Bellerophon rashly mounted the winged horse, and tried to ascend into heaven, an oestrus was commanded to strike his horse, and render him unmanageable. A similar calamity happened to Ampelus, the favourite of Bacchus, who was by the same minute, but powerful agent, thrown to the ground from a sacred bull, and killed through the jealousy of Selene. As it was supposed to make its attacks by the command of heaven, any divine or extraordinary impulse, was called among the ancients an oestrus. Hence, Orpheus having been forced to wander a long time in exile, says, that he was delivered at last from that madness, by his mother, Calliope.

καὶ με ἀληττειήσῃ καὶ ἐξ οἰστροῦ ἐσάωσῃ

μητρὸς ἡμετέρας. —————

* Vinasauf.

Nor was the idea, so commonly entertained, that the oestrum came to execute the vengeance of heaven, without foundation. The plague of flies by which Jehovah laid waste the land of Egypt, and humbled the proud spirit of Pharaoh, is well known to every reader of the Scriptures; and from the rapid sketch which has now been given of the character and habits of this minute, but terrible adversary, a correct judgment may be formed of the wide devastation and extreme suffering which that visitation produced. Bochart contends, that it was not the oestrum, but the dog-fly, which Jehovah employed in this plague, and advances several reasons for his opinion; but they are not quite satisfactory. The question is very difficult, and the solution of little importance to the object of this work. The description also communicates a dignity and force to certain threatenings of the prophet, which to a superficial inquirer, may perhaps wear an air of meanness. It was no trifling judgment with which Isaiah threatened his refractory people: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall hiss for the fly that is in the uttermost parts of the rivers of Egypt, and for the bee that is in the land of Assyria. And they shall come, and shall rest all of them in the desolate valleys, and in the holes of the rocks, and upon all thorns, and upon all bushes *." If the prediction be understood in the literal sense, it represents the oestra or *cincinellæ*, as the armies of Jehovah, summoned by him to battle against his offending people; or, if it be taken metaphorically, which is perhaps the proper way of expounding it, the prophet compares the numerous and destructive armies of Babylon, to the countless swarms of the oestra, whose distant hum is said to strike the quadruped with consternation, and whose bite inflicts on man and beast, a torment almost insupportable.

We are deeply indebted to Mr Bruce, who has enabled us to identify the Ethiopian FLY, mentioned by the prophet.

"This insect is called *Zimb*; it has not been described by

* Isa. vii. 18.

any naturalist. It is in size very little larger than a bee, of a thicker proportion, and his wings, which are broader than those of a bee, placed separate like those of a fly; they are of pure gauze, without colour or spot upon them; the head is large, the upper jaw or lip is sharp, and has at the end of it, a strong pointed hair, of about a quarter of an inch long; the lower jaw has two of these pointed hairs; and this pencil of hairs, when joined together, makes a resistance to the finger, nearly equal to that of a strong hogs bristle. Its legs are serrated in the inside, and the whole covered with brown hair or down. As soon as this plague appears, and their buzzing is heard, all the cattle forsake their food, and run wildly about the plain, till they die, worn out with fatigue, fright, and hunger. No remedy remains, but to leave the black earth, and hasten down to the sands of Atbara; and there they remain, while the rains last, this cruel enemy never daring to pursue them farther.

“ Though his size be immense, as is his strength, and his body covered with a thick skin, defended with strong hair; yet, even the camel is not capable to sustain the violent punctures the fly makes with his pointed proboscis. He must lose no time in removing to the sands of Atbara; for when attacked by this fly, his body, head, and legs, break out into large bosses, which swell, break, and putrify, to the certain destruction of the creature.

“ Even the elephant and rhinoceros, who, by reason of their enormous bulk, and the vast quantity of food and water they daily need, cannot shift to desert and dry places, as the season may require, are obliged to roll themselves in mud and mire; which, when dry, coats them over like armour, and enables them to stand their ground against this winged assassin; yet, I have found some of these tubercles upon almost every elephant and rhinoceros that I have seen, and attribute them to this cause.

“ All the inhabitants of the sea-coast of Melinda, down to cape Gardefan, to Saba, and the south coast of the Red sea,

are obliged to put themselves in motion, and remove to the next sand, in the beginning of the rainy season, to prevent all their stock of cattle from being destroyed. This is not a partial emigration; the inhabitants of all the countries, from the mountains of Abyssinia northward, to the confluence of the Nile, and Astaboras, are once a year, obliged to change their abode, and seek protection on the sands of Beja; nor is there any alternative, or means of avoiding this, though a hostile band was in their way, capable of spoiling them of half their substance; and this is now actually the case, as we shall see when we come to speak of Senaar.

“Of all those that have written upon these countries, the prophet Isaiah alone has given an account of this animal, and the manner of its operation, Is. vii. 18, 19. “And it shall come to pass in that day,” &c.—That is, they shall cut off from the cattle their usual retreat to the desert, by taking possession of those places, and meeting them there, where ordinarily they never come, and which therefore, were the refuge of the cattle.

“We cannot read the history of the plagues which God brought upon Pharaoh, by the hands of Moses, without stopping a moment to consider a singularity, a very principal one, which attended this plague of the fly, (Exod. viii. 20, &c.) It was not till this time, and by means of this insect, that God said he would separate his people from the Egyptians; and it would seem, that then a law was given to them, that fixed the limits of their habitation. It is well known, as I have repeatedly said, that the land of Goshen or Geschen, the possession of the Israelites, was a land of pasture, which was not tilled or sown, because it was not overflowed by the Nile. But the land overflowed by the Nile, was the black earth of the valley of Egypt, and it was here that God confined the flies; for, he says, it shall be a sign of this separation of the people, which he had then made, that not one fly should be seen in the sand, or pasture ground, the land of Goshen; and this kind of soil,

has ever since been the refuge of all cattle, emigrating from the black earth, to the lowest parts of Atbara. Isaiah indeed says, that the fly shall be in all the desert places, and consequently, the sands; yet, this was a particular dispensation of Providence, to answer a special end, the desolation of Egypt, and was not a repeal of the general law, but a confirmation of it; it was an exception for a particular purpose, and for a limited time.

“ I have already said so much on this subject, that it would be tiring my reader’s patience to repeat any thing concerning him.—He has no sting, though he seems to me to be rather of the bee kind; but his motion is more sudden and rapid than that of the bee, and resembles that of the gad-fly in England. There is something particular in the sound or buzzing of this insect: it is a jarring noise, together with a humming; which induces me to believe it proceeds, at least in part, from a vibration made with the three hairs at his snout.

“ The Chaldee version is content with calling the animal simply Zebub, which signifies the fly in general, as we express it in English. The Arabs call it Zimb in their translation, which has the same general signification. The Ethiopic translation calls it Tsaltsalya, which is the true name of this particular fly in Geez, and was the same in Hebrew*.”

This interesting account has been verified by a late traveller, who received a similar description of the fly, and its terrible ravages in Egypt and Abyssinia, from an intelligent native of the latter country.

The Hornet.

Another insect which Heaven has sometimes employed to avenge the quarrel of his covenant, is the hornet; which is a larger species of wasp. The irascible temper and poisonous sting of the wasp, are too well known to require description; they have been mentioned by the natural historians, and cele-

* Bruce’s Travels, vol. 1. p. 5, vol. 5, p. 191.

brated by the poets of every age and country. Thus Ovid de Sileno,

“ *Millia crabronum coeunt et vertice nudo
Spiculo defigunt oraue prima notant.*”

And Aristophanes,

Ἦν μὴ τις ὥσπερ σφηκιαν βλήτῃ με καφεσσιζῇ.

In three parallel places of Scripture, the sacred writer mentions the hornet which Jehovah sent before his people, to expel the Canaanites from their habitations: “And I will send hornets before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite from before thee*.” This promise was afterwards renewed a short time before that people passed the Jordan: “Moreover, the Lord thy God will send the hornet among them, till they that are left, and hide themselves from thee, be destroyed†.” Both these promises, we learn from Joshua, were punctually fulfilled: “And I sent the hornet before you, which drave them out from before you, even the two kings of the Amorites, but not with thy sword, nor with thy bow‡.”

At what particular time during the wars of Joshua, the Lord, in fulfilment of his promise, sent the hornet against the inhabitants of Canaan, and what impression its attack made upon the enemies of Israel, we are no where informed in Scripture. On this account, several writers of great eminence consider the words of Moses as a metaphor, denoting the terror of the Lord, or some remarkable disease which he commissioned to lay waste the country before the armies of Israel. But neither the words of Moses nor Joshua betray the smallest indication of metaphor; and in a plain narration, we are never, without the most obvious necessity, to depart from the literal sense. The inspired historian could not mean the terror of the Lord, as Augustine is inclined to suppose; for he had mentioned this in the verse immediately preceding: “I will send my fear before thee, and will destroy all the people to

* Exod. xxiv. 28.

† Deut. vii. 20.

‡ Josh. xxiv. 12.

whom thou shalt come, and I will make all thine enemies turn their backs unto thee." Upon which it is added, "And I will send hornets before thee *." Nor could any particular disease be intended; for no disease was ever called by this name. Junius gives a different version: I will send before thee fear or disease as a hornet; but the comparative particle *as*, is not in the text, and must not be supplied by the caprice of translators. The words of Joshua are express, without either metaphor or comparison: "I have sent the hornet before you." It is no valid objection to the literal sense, that the circumstances of time and place are not mentioned by the sacred writer; for this is by no means an unusual omission in the rapid narrative of an inspired historian. To mention but one example: The patriarch Jacob gave to his son Joseph a portion of land, which he took from the Amorite by force of arms †; but when or in what place this battle was fought, we are not informed. The hornet, it is probable, marched before the armies of Israel, till the five nations, that had been doomed for their numerous and long continued crimes to destruction, were subdued; which rendered such a circumstantial detail unnecessary and improper.

But who can believe, say they, that the hornets of Canaan were so vexatious to the inhabitants, that they were forced to abandon their dwellings, and seek for other habitations? The testimony of an inspired writer ought to silence all such objections; but, in reality, the same thing has not unfrequently happened in the history of the world. Both Athenæus and Eustatheus inform us, that the people about Pæonia and Dardania were compelled by frogs to forsake their native country, and fix their abode in a distant region. If Pliny may be credited, the ancient city of Troy was forced to open her gates, after a war of ten years, not so much by the victorious arms of the Greeks, as by an innumerable host of mice, which compelled the Trojans to desert their houses, and retire to the neighbouring mountains; and in Italy, whole nations were

* Exod. xxiii. 27, 28.

† Gen. xlviii. 22.

driven from their possessions by the same destructive creature, which in immense numbers overran their fields, devoured every green thing, and, grubbing up the roots, converted some of the fairest regions of that country into an inhospitable waste. The Myusians, according to Pausanias, were forced, by swarms of gnats, to desert their city; and the Scythians beyond the Ister, are recorded to have been expelled from their country by countless myriads of bees. But, since the wasp is more vexatious than the bee, its sting more severe, and its hostility more virulent—it is by no means incredible, that many of the Canaanites were forced, by so formidable an enemy, to remove beyond the reach of their attack.

The Ant.

The name of this minute insect in Hebrew is נמלה, *Nemala*, from a root which signifies to cut down; perhaps, because the God of Nature has taught it to divide or cut off the top of the grain, which it lays up in its subterraneous cells for the winter, to prevent their germination. This operation is attested by numerous ancient writers; among whom, we observe the celebrated names of Pliny and Plutarch. It is at least certain, that the ant cuts off the tops of growing corn that it may seize upon the grain; which may perhaps be the true reason of its Hebrew name.

The allusions to this little animal in the sacred writings, although not numerous, are by no means unimportant. The wisest of men refers us to the bright example of its foresight and activity: “Go to the ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest*.” Their uniform care and promptitude in improving every moment as it passes; the admirable order in which they proceed to the scene of action; the perfect harmony which reigns in their bands; the eagerness which they discover in running to the assistance of the weak or the fatigued; the

* Prov. vi. 6.

readiness with which those that have no burden yield the way to their fellows that bend under their loads, or when the grain happens to be too heavy, cut it in two, and take the half upon their own shoulders; furnish a striking example of industry, benevolence, and concord, to the human family. Nor should the skill and vigour which they display in digging under ground, in building their houses, and in constructing their cells, in filling their granaries with corn for the winter, in forming channels for carrying off the rain; in bringing forth their hidden stores which are in danger of spoiling by the moisture, and exposing them to the sun and air, be passed over in silence. These, and many other operations clearly shew how instructive a teacher is the ant, even to men of understanding; and how much reason Solomon had to hold up its shining example to their imitation. "Go to the ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways," not that thou mayst become learned, but wise; and especially wise in working out thy salvation, laying up durable riches while the season of mercy continues; providing for that state of never-ending duration, when, as the Saviour himself attests, no man can work.

"Parvula nam exemplo est magni formica laboris.

Ore trahit quodcunque potest atque addit acervo.

Quem struit, haud ignara ac non incauta futuri." *Hor.*

We find another allusion to the ant near the close of the same book: "The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer*." It is, according to the royal preacher, one of those things which are little upon the earth, but exceeding wise. The superior wisdom of the ant has been recognized by many writers. Horace in the passage from which the preceding quotation is taken, praises its sagacity: Virgil celebrates its foresight, in providing for the wants and infirmities of old age, while it is young and vigorous:

—— "atque inopi metuens formica senectæ†."

And we learn from Hesiod, that among the earliest Greeks it

* Prov. xxx. 25.

† Geor. b. 1. l. 186.

was called Idris ; that is, wise, because it foresaw the coming storm, and the inauspicious day. Aristotle observes, that some of those animals which have no blood, possess more intelligence and sagacity than some that have blood ; among which, are the bees and the ants. Cicero believed that the ant is not only furnished with senses, but also with mind, reason and memory : “ *In formica non modo sensus sed etiam mens, ratio, memoriæ.*” Some authors go so far as to prefer the ant to man himself, on account of the vigorous intelligence and sagacity which they display in all their operations. Although this opinion is justly chargeable with extravagance, yet it must be admitted, that the union of so many noble qualities in so small a corpuscle, is one of the most remarkable phenomena in the works of nature. This is admitted by Solomon himself ; “ The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer.” He calls them a people, because they are gregarious ; living in a state of society, though without any king or leader to maintain order and superintend their affairs. The term people is frequently applied to them by ancient writers. Ælian says, that the ants which ascend the stalks of growing corn, throw down the spikes which they have bit off, *τω ὄημω, τω κατω*, to the people, that is, the ants below. Apuleius, describing the manner in which the ants convoke an assembly of the nation, says, that when the signal is given, *Ruunt aliæ superque aliæ sepedum populorum undæ*. The wise man adds, they are not strong ; that is, they are feeble insects ; nor is it possible, that great strength can reside in so minute a creature. Hence the Arabians say contemptuously of a man that has become weak and infirm, “ he is feebler than the ant*.”

The Spider.

The spider is a venomous insect, whose form is not less forbidding, than its dispositions are cruel, and its habits disgusting. It is only twice mentioned in the sacred writings ; and in both instances, the inspired writers allude to the conduct and

* Bochart.

lot of wicked men. The first passage in which it occurs, is in the book of Job, where Bildad displays the justice of God in the punishment of the hypocrite, "Whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider's web. He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand; he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure*." The house of the spider is her web, which she spreads to catch the heedless fly, where she lives, and rears her young. The other passage is in the prophecies of Isaiah, where, describing the conduct of his degenerate nation, he says: "They hatch cockatrice eggs, and weave the spider's web --- their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works: their works are works of iniquity, and the act of violence is in their hands†." Weak and unstable as the spider's web, are all the professions and works of the hypocrite. The filaments which compose the flimsy texture in which she dwells, are finely spun, and curiously woven; but a single touch dissolves the fabric: equally frail and evanescent are his wisest and most elaborate contrivances. All the materials of which her house is constructed, are derived from her own bowels: and all his hopes are founded in the goodness of his heart, and the excellence of his conduct. She fabricates her web to be at once a covering to herself, and a snare to her neighbour: and for the same odious purposes he assumes the garb of religion. But the deceitful veil which he throws over the deformity of his character, can remain only for a short time; like the spider's web, it shall soon be swept away, and his loathsome form exposed to every eye. Like her, he shall perish in the ruins of that habitation which he constructed with so much care, and where he reposed in fatal security.

The greater part of modern interpreters, among whom are to be numbered our own translators, imagine that the spider is intended by Solomon in these words. "The spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in king's palaces‡. But the wise man

* Job viii. 14.

† Isa. lix. 5.

‡ Prov. xxx. 28.

uses a different word from the common Hebrew name of that insect, and subjoins a description, which in one particular is by no means applicable to it; for, although several ancient writers have given fingers to the spider, not one has honoured her with hands. An ancient poet has accordingly taught her to say,

“Nulla mihi manus est, pedibus tamen omnia fiunt.”

Had Solomon intended to describe the spider, he would not have merely said, she taketh hold with her hands, but she spins her thread and weaves her toils, circumstances assuredly much more worthy of notice; nor would he have said, that she takes up her abode in king's palaces, when she more frequently constructs her house in the cabins of the poor, where she dwells in greater security and freedom. The opinion of the celebrated Bochart, our principal guide in sacred zoology, that the newt, a species of small lizard, is meant, seems, in every respect, entitled to the preference. This venomous reptile answers to the description which the royal preacher gives of her form and habits: nature has furnished her with hands, and taught her to aspire to the superior accommodations which the palace of an eastern monarch affords*.

The Bee.

The bee is a gregarious insect, living in a state of society, and subject to a regular government. From this last circumstance, its Hebrew name דברה from a root which signifies to speak, to rule, to lead, is derived. It is an opinion commonly received among the ancients, that bees were propagated in two ways, either by those of their own species, or in the cavities of a dead carcase. Their opinion is beautifully stated by Virgil in these lines:

“Hic vero subitum ac dictu mirabile monstrum
Aspiciunt, liquefacta boum per viscera toto
Stridere apes utero et ruptis effervere costis,
Immensas que trahi nubes jamque arbore summa
Confluere, et lentis uvam demittere ramis.”

* Bochart. Hieroz.

“ But here they behold a sudden prodigy, and wonderous to relate, bees through all the belly, hum amidst the putrid bowels of the cattle, pour forth with the fermenting juices from the burst sides, and in immense clouds roll along, then swarm together on the top of a tree, and hang down in a cluster from the bending boughs.”

This opinion, however, is directly contradicted by another, which was held by some writers of the greatest reputation in ancient times. Aristotle taught, that the bee will not light upon a dead carcase, nor taste the flesh. Varro asserts, that she never sits down in an unclean place, or upon any thing which emits an unpleasant smell. They are never seen, like flies, feeding on blood or flesh ; while wasps and hornets all delight in such food, the bee never touches a dead body. So much they dislike an impure smell, that when one of them dies, the survivors immediately carry out the carcase from the hive, that they may not be annoyed by the effluvia. This fact is admitted by Virgil himself:

“ Tum corpora luce carentum
Exportant tectis, et tristia funera ducunt.”

Geor. b. 4. l. 255.

The discovery which Samson made, when he went down to Timnath, may seem to contradict the latter, and confirm the former opinion: “ And after a time, he returned to take her, and he turned aside to see the carcase of the lion: and behold there was a swarm of bees, and honey in the carcase of the lion*.” But it is not said the swarm was generated there, but only that Samson found them in the carcase; nor is it said, that the lion had been recently killed, and that the carcase was in a state of putrefaction: the contrary seems to be intimated by the phrase *after a time*, literally, after days, one of the most common expressions in Scripture for a year. Hence the lion was killed a whole year before this visit to Timnath, when he discovered the swarm in the carcase. But the

* Jud. xiv. 8.

flesh of the carcase, which Samson left in the open field a whole year, the prey of wild beasts and ravenous birds, must have been entirely consumed long before his return, or so completely dried by the violent heat of the sun, that nothing but the skeleton, or exsiccated frame remained. Within the bare, or withered enclosure of the bones, which had exhaled their last putrid effluvia, the swarm, in perfect consistency with their usual delicacy, might construct their cells and deposit their honey. This conjecture is confirmed by the testimony of Herodotus, who declares that bees have swarmed in dry bones.

Some writers have contended that bees are destitute of the sense of hearing; but their opinion is entirely without foundation. This will appear, if any proof were necessary, from the following prediction: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall hiss for the fly that is in the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt; and for the bee that is in the land of Assyria*." The allusion which this text involves, is the practice of calling out the bees from their hives, by a hissing, or whistling sound, to their labour in the fields, and summoning them again to return, when the heavens begin to lower, or the shadows of evening to fall. In this manner, Jehovah threatens to rouse the enemies of Judah, and lead them to the prey. However widely scattered, or far remote from the scene of action, they should hear his voice, and with as much promptitude as the bee, that has been taught to recognize the signal of its owner, and obey his call, they should assemble their forces; and although weak and insignificant as a swarm of bees in the estimation of a proud and infatuated people, they should come, with irresistible might, and take possession of the rich and beautiful region which had been abandoned by its terrified inhabitants.

The bee is represented by the ancients, as a vexatious, and even a formidable adversary; and the experience of every per-

* Isa. vii. 18.

son who turns his attention to the temper and habits of that valuable insect, attests the truth of their assertion. They were so troublesome in some districts of Crete, that, if we may believe Pliny, the inhabitants were actually compelled to forsake their habitations. And, according to Ælian, some places in Scythia, beyond the Ister, were formerly inaccessible, on account of the numerous swarms of bees by which they were infested. The statements of these ancient writers is confirmed by Mr Park, in the second volume of his Travels: Some of his associates imprudently attempted to rob a numerous hive, which they found in their way. The exasperated little animals rushed out to defend their property, and attacked them with so much fury, that they quickly compelled the whole company, men, horses, and asses, to scamper off in all directions. The horses were never recovered, and a number of the asses were so severely stung that they died next day: and so great was the loss our intrepid traveller sustained in the engagement, that he despondingly concluded his journey was at an end. The allusion of Moses, therefore, to their fierce hostility, in the beginning of his last words to Israel, is both just and beautiful: “And the Amorites which dwelt in that mountain came out against you, and chased you as bees do, and destroyed you in Seir, even unto Hormah *.” The Amorites, it appears, were the most bitter adversaries to Israel, of all the nations of Canaan; like bees that are easily irritated, that attack with great fury, and increasing numbers, the person that dares to molest their hive, and persecute him in his flight, to a considerable distance—the incensed Amorites had collected their hostile bands, and chased, with considerable slaughter, the chosen tribes from their territory. The Psalmist also complains, that his enemies compassed him about like bees; fiercely attacking him on every side. The bee, when called to defend her hive, assails with fearless intrepidity the largest and the most ferocious animal; and the Psalmist found from experience, that neither the

* Deut. i. 44.

purity of his character, the splendour of his rank, nor the greatness of his power, were sufficient to shield him from the covered machinations, or open assaults of his cruel and numerous enemies.

But the bee has been renowned from time memorial, not so much for its martial prowess, as for singular industry, strict discipline, and valuable products. These have excited the admiration of every age, and every people; and sometimes procured it the honour of lending its name to females, of various ranks in society. Deborah, the Hebrew name of the bee, was the name of Rebecca's nurse; and of a prophetess, who, in the time of the Judges, ruled the tribes of Israel. In ancient Greece, Melissa was the name given to the nurse of Jupiter, the wife of Periander, king of Corinth, and to many other illustrious females. On the delicious stores of the hive, they set the highest value. The patriarch Jacob commanded his sons to carry down into Egypt, among other precious articles, a little honey, as a present to Pharaoh. When David visited Mahanaim, the wealthy inhabitants entertained him with honey and butter; and honey appears to have been reckoned among the greatest delicacies at the sumptuous table of Solomon; for in the Song, he joins it with myrrh and spice, wine and milk, with which the Lord of the church is entertained in his garden*. The holy Psalmist, guided by the Spirit of inspiration, and elevated almost beyond the lot of mortality, with the liveliest sense of the Divine favour, could pronounce no higher eulogium on the revealed will of his God, than this: "How sweet are thy words to my taste, yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb!" "What is sweeter than honey," demanded the companions of Samson: and what is more valuable in itself, than the word of God; and what more grateful to the renewed soul, than the exceeding great and precious promises of the gospel, and the pure and sanctifying injunctions of the law, which regulate all

* Song v. 1.

his steps, supply all his wants, and lead him up to spiritual perfection, and the full enjoyment of his Father in heaven? No sweets of nature, no compositions of art, can fully express the value that he sets upon the blessings of salvation, nor the holy delight, which, in the possession of them, diffuses itself over all his bosom *.

The Moth.

The allusions to this insect in the sacred writings, although few in number, are of considerable importance. The first instance occurs in the reproof which Eliphaz addresses to Job, and expresses in a very striking manner, the extreme frailty of sinful man, and the shortness and uncertainty of human life: "Behold, he putteth no trust in his servants; and his angels he chargeth with folly: How much less in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth†?" Frail man is crushed as with a moth; in secrecy and silence he sinks into the grave. The same idea seems to be conveyed under this allusion, in several other texts of Scripture: "Lo, they shall wax old as doth a garment; the moth shall consume them‡." "Fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings. For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool. They shall perish with as little noise, as a garment under the tooth of a moth§." In the prophecies of Hosea, God himself says: "I will be as a moth unto Ephraim, and as a lion;" that is, I will send silent and secret judgments upon him, which shall imperceptibly waste his beauty, corrode his power, and diminish his strength, and will finish his destruction with open and irresistible calamities.

Or the meaning may be, As the moth crumbles into dust under the slightest pressure, or the gentlest touch; so man dissolves with equal ease, and vanishes into darkness, under the finger of the Almighty. Deeply sensible of this affecting truth, the royal Psalmist, earnestly deprecates the judgments of

* Bochart.

† Job iv. 19.

‡ Isa. l. 9.

§ Ch. li. 6, 7.

God, humbly confessing his own, and the inability of every man, to endure his frown: "Remove thy stroke away from me: I am consumed by the blow of thy hand. When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth: surely every man is vanity, Selah *." No created strength can support him; no precautions of wisdom and foresight defend, no station exempt him; the frown of his Maker, like that destructive animalcule, gradually changes his countenance, and at last consigns him to the grave.

The moth forms her cell in the woollen garment; a frail structure, which is soon destroyed by the devouring energy of the builder. Day after day she consumes the stuff in which her dwelling is placed, till both are involved in one common ruin, and reduced to nothing.

—— "Cui stragula vestis

Bluttarum ac tinearum epulæ, putrescat in arca." *Hor.*

Such, in the estimation of Job, is the prosperity of a wicked man: "He buildeth his house as a moth, and as a booth that the keeper maketh †." The term which that afflicted patriarch uses in this passage, signifies a moth, and also the constellation Arcturus. Some interpreters accordingly render the words: "the wicked man shall build his house like Arcturus; shall raise, for his accommodation and pleasure, a splendid and magnificent abode, bright as the stars of Arcturus in the shining vault of heaven; but it shall speedily rush into ruin, like a temporary booth, where the keeper of a vineyard watches his property for a little while till the vintage is gathered." But this interpretation by no means accords with the design of the speaker; for it introduces an antithesis into the text, instead of the conjunction, which Job evidently meant, and separates the two comparisons of the same thing, as if they referred to different objects. Hence the common version, which unquestionably expresses the true sense of the clause, is entitled to

* Psalm xxxix, 10, 11.

† Job xxvii. 18.

the preference. "The wicked man, like the moth, builds his house at the expense of another. He expels his neighbours from their possessions, that he may join house to house, and lay field to field, till there be no place for others to inhabit, except as dependants on his forbearance or bounty, that he may dwell alone, as the sole proprietor, in the midst of the earth *." The idea of Job is thus expressed by another prophet: "They covet fields, and take them by violence; and houses, and take them away; so they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage †." But his unrighteous acquisitions shall be of short continuance; they shall moulder insensibly away, returning to the lawful owner, or passing into the possession of others. The same allusion is involved in the direction of our Lord to his disciples: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal ‡." The word treasure commonly suggests to our minds the idea of some durable substance, as precious stones, gold and silver, upon which the persevering industry of a moth can make no impression; but, in the language of inspiration, it denotes every thing collected together, which men reckon valuable. The Jews had treasures of corn, of wine, of oil, of honey §; treasures of gold, silver, and brass ||. The robes of princes were also a part of their treasure, upon which they often set a particular value. Rich vestments made a conspicuous figure in the treasury of Ulysses:

ὄθι νητος χρεσος και χαλκος εκειτο

Ε'σθης τ' εν χηλιδισιν, ἄλγες τ' ευωδες ελαιον. *Odyss. b. 2. l. 336.*

These were, from their nature, exposed to the depredations of the moth; fabricated of perishing materials, they were liable to be prematurely consumed, or taken away by fraud or vio-

* Isai. v. 8. † Mic. ii. 2. ‡ Mat. vi, 19, 20. § Jer. xli. 3.

|| Ezek. xxxiii. 4. Dan. xi. 43.

lence; but the favour of God, and the graces of his Spirit, and the enjoyment of eternal happiness, are neither liable to internal decay nor external violence, and, by consequence, are the proper objects of our highest regard, chief solicitude, and constant pursuit.

The Locust.

The locust is one of the most terrible scourges with which the incensed majesty of heaven chastises a guilty world. Not fewer than ten different names are given to this creature in the sacred volume, every one of which, after the manner of Hebrew nouns, marks some distinctive character or peculiar effect. It is called ארבה, *arbe*, from its extraordinary fecundity, in which it is surpassed by no creature. The sacred writers, in speaking of their numbers, use the most general terms which language can furnish: "For they came up with their cattle and their tents, and they came as grasshoppers (or locusts) for multitude; for both they and their camels were without number*." "And the Midianites, and the Amalekites, and all the children of the east, lay along in the valley like grasshoppers (or locusts) for multitude†." The Psalmist mentions their immense numbers in the same terms: "He spake, and the locusts came, and caterpillars, and that without number‡." In the prophecies of Jeremiah, the enemies of Egypt are thus described: "They shall cut down her forest, saith the Lord, though it cannot be searched, because they are more than the grasshoppers (locusts), and are innumerable§." "Make thyself many as the cankerworm," said the prophet Nahum to the people of Nineveh, "make thyself many as the locusts||." The accuracy of these statements is attested by numerous and unexceptionable witnesses. In some regions of the east, the whole earth is at times covered with locusts for the space of several leagues, often to the depth of four inches. The noise they make in browsing on the trees and herbage, may be heard

* Jud. vi. 5.

† Ch. vii. 12.

‡ Ps. cv. 34.

§ Jer. xlv. 23.

|| Nah. iii. 15.

at a great distance, and resembles that of an army foraging in secret. The inhabitants of Syria have observed that locusts are always bred by too mild winters, and that they constantly come from the deserts of Arabia. When they breed, which is in the month of October, they make a hole in the ground with their tails, and having laid three hundred eggs in it, and covered them with their feet, expire; for they never live above six months and a half. Neither rains nor frost, however long and severe, can destroy their eggs; they continue till spring, and, hatched by the heat of the sun, the young locusts issue from the earth about the middle of April*.

From the circumstance of their young ones issuing from the ground, they are called גִּיב, Gob or Gobai, from an Arabic verb, which signifies to rise out of the earth.

The third name is גַּזָּם Gazam, from the root gazaz, to cut off, or to spoil: and more destructive and insatiable spoilers were never let loose to desolate the earth. Wherever their innumerable bands direct their march, the verdure of the country, though it resembled before the paradise of God, almost instantaneously disappears. The trees and plants, stripped of their leaves, and reduced to their naked boughs and stems, cause the dreary image of winter to succeed in an instant, to the rich scenery of spring. In a few hours they eat up every green thing, and consign the miserable inhabitants of the desolated regions to inevitable famine. Many years are not sufficient to repair the desolation which these destructive insects produce. When they first appear on the frontiers of the cultivated lands, the inhabitants strive to repulse them by raising large clouds of smoke, but frequently their herbs and wet straw fail them; they then dig trenches, where innumerable multitudes of these vermin are buried. But the two most powerful destroyers of these insects, is the south, or southeasterly winds, and the bird called the samarmar. These birds, which greatly resemble the woodpecker, follow them in

* Volney's Trav.

large flocks, greedily devour them, and besides, kill as many as they can; they are, therefore, much respected by the peasants, and no person is ever allowed to destroy them. The southerly winds waft them over the Mediterranean, where they perish in so great quantities, that when their carcasses are cast on the shore, they infect the air for several days to a considerable distance. In a state of putrefaction, the stench emitted from their bodies is scarcely to be endured; the traveller, who crushes them below the wheels of his waggon, or the feet of his horses, is reduced to the necessity of washing his nose with vinegar, and holding his handkerchief, dipped in it, continually to his nostrils*.

One of the most grievous calamities ever inflicted by the locust, happened to the regions of Africa in the time of the Romans, and fell with peculiar weight on those parts which were subject to their empire. Scarcely recovered from the miseries of the last Punic war, Africa was doomed to suffer, about one hundred and twenty-three years before the birth of Christ, another desolation, as terrible as it was unprecedented. An immense number of locusts covered the whole country, consumed every plant and every blade of grass in the field, without sparing the roots, and the leaves of the trees, with the tendrils upon which they grew. These being exhausted, they penetrated with their teeth the bark, however bitter, and even corroded the dry and solid timber. After they had accomplished this terrible destruction, a sudden blast of wind dispersed them into different portions, and after tossing them awhile in the air, plunged their innumerable hosts into the sea. But the deadly scourge was not then at an end, the raging billows threw up enormous heaps of their dead and corrupted bodies, upon that long extended coast, which produced a most insupportable and poisonous stench. This soon brought on a pestilence, which affected every species of animals; so that birds, and sheep, and cattle, and even the wild beasts of

* Volney's Trav.

the field, perished in great numbers ; and their carcasses, being soon rendered putrid by the foulness of the air, added greatly to the general corruption. The destruction of the human species was horrible ; in Numidia, where at that time Micipsa was king, eighty thousand persons died ; and in that part of the sea coast which bordered upon the region of Carthage and Utica, two hundred thousand are said to have been carried off by this pestilence *.

This statement will shew, that the locust is one of the most terrible instruments in the hand of incensed Heaven ; it will discover the reason that the inspired writers, in denouncing his judgments, so frequently allude to this insect, and threaten the sinner with its vengeance ; it accounts, in the most satisfactory manner, for the figures which the prophets borrow, when they describe the march of cruel and destructive armies, from the character and habits of this creature. The narratives of Volney, Thevenot, and other travellers, who have seen and described the innumerable swarms of the locusts, and their wasteful ravages, fully confirm the glowing description of Joel and other inspired prophets, quoted in the beginning of this article. “ A nation,” says Joel, “ has come up upon my land, strong and without number. --- He has laid my vine waste, and barked my fig tree ; he has made it clean bare, and cast it away, the branches thereof are made white --- the vine is dried up, and the fig tree languishes, the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree, even all the trees of the field are withered ; because joy is withered away from the sons of men.” “ A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness. A fire devoureth before them, and behind them a flame burneth. They march every one in his ways ; they do not break their ranks, neither does one thrust another. The land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness.” “ They shall run upon the wall ; they shall climb up upon the houses ; they shall

* Orosius, as quoted by Harmer.

enter into the windows like a thief. The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble, the sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining*." The same allusion is involved in these words of Nahum, concerning the fall of the Assyrian empire: "Thy crowned are as the locusts; and thy captains as the great grasshoppers, which camp in the hedges in the cold day, but when the sun ariseth, they flee away, and their place is not known†." Bochart and other writers, who are best acquainted with the eastern countries, mention a great variety of locusts, which vindicates the language of the prophet: "Thy captains are as the great grasshoppers." The next clause is attended with some difficulty. Mr Lowth, in his comment, supposes that these insects flee away, to avoid the heat of the sun; and it has been queried, whether the phrase *cold day* does not mean the night. But it is well known, that the heat of the sun, instead of compelling the locusts to retire, quickens them into life and activity; and the words *cold day*, are never used in Scripture, nor by any writer of value, to signify the night. The prophet evidently refers, not to their flight during the heat of the day, but to the time of their total departure; for he does not speak of their moving from one field to another, but of their leaving the country which they have invaded, so completely, that the place of their retreat is not known.

The day of cold cannot mean the depth of winter, for they do not make their appearance in Palestine at that season; and although in Arabia, from whence Fulcherius supposes they come, thickets are found in some places, and it has been imagined that the locusts lie concealed in them during the winter, which may be thought to be their camping in the hedges in the cold day; yet it is to be observed, that the word translated hedges, properly signifies, not living fences, but stone walls‡, and therefore cannot with propriety be applied to thickets.

* Joel i. 6, 7, 10, 11, 12. ch. ii. 2, 3, 9, 10.

† Nahum iii. 17.

‡ See Num. xxii. 24, 25. Eccl. x. 8. Is. lviii. 12, &c.

But, if the locust appears in the months of April and May, the phrase "cold day" may seem to be improperly chosen. This difficulty, which may be thought a considerable one, arises entirely from our translation. The original term קָרָה, *Karah*, denotes both cold and cooling; and the difficulty vanishes, when the latter is introduced, and the words are translated, the day of cooling, or the time when the orientals open their windows with the view of refrigerating their houses, or retreat from the oppressive heats which commence in the months of April and May, to the cooling shades of their gardens. A derivative of this term is employed by the sacred historian, to denote the refrigeratory or summer parlour, which Eglon the king of Moab occupied, when Ehud presented the tribute of his nation*.

Another term used by the sacred writers to signify the locust, is חָגַב, *Hagab*; which our translators render sometimes locust and sometimes grasshopper. They translate it locust in the following passage: "If I shut up heaven that there be no more rain, or if I command the locusts (*Hagab*) to devour the land, or if I send a pestilence among my people: if my people shall humble themselves and pray unto me, and seek my face, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and heal their land†." We cannot reasonably doubt, that the word, in this place, denotes the locust, for this declaration was made in answer to Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple, that if the heaven should be shut up, and there should be no rain; or if there should be famine, pestilence, blasting, mildew, locust, or caterpillar,—then God would hear them when they spread forth their hands towards that holy place. It must also be remembered, that the grasshopper is an inoffensive animal, or noxious in a very slight degree, and, therefore, by no means a proper subject for deprecation in the temple.

This circumstance also shews, that the Hebrew term here

* Jud. iii. 20.

† 2 Chron. vii. 13.

does not mean the cicada, as some writers have supposed ; for, though the noise which they make is extremely disagreeable and disturbing, as Chandler complains, it is not an insect so distressing to the orientals, as to admit the idea that it was a subject of solemn prayer at the dedication. To disturb the slumbers of the weary traveller, or the toil-worn peasant, and to devour the fruits of the earth, and plunge the inhabitants of a country into all the horrors of famine, are evils of a very different magnitude.

Hagab is rendered grasshopper in the twelfth chapter of Ecclesiastes ; and the circumstances, it must be confessed, harmonize with the character of those creatures ; for it will be readily admitted that their chirping must be disagreeable to the aged and infirm, that naturally love quiet, and are commonly unable to bear much noise. But it is more probable that hagab denotes the locust, which is proverbially loquacious. They make a very loud, screaming, and disagreeable noise with their wings ; if one begin, others join, and the hateful concert becomes universal ; a pause then ensues, and, as it were, on a signal given, it again commences ; and in this manner, they continue squalling for two or three hours without intermission. Mr Harmer is of opinion, that hagab ought to be rendered locust in this passage too, because it becomes a burden by its depredations, and desire fails ; that is, every green thing disappears, and nature puts on the semblance of universal deadness : and such is the affecting appearance of the human body in extreme old age ; it resembles a tree which the locust has stripped of its leaves, has deprived of its bark, and left naked and bare, to wither in the blast, and moulder, by degrees, into the dust from whence it rose.

The interpretation is ingenious ; but the common meaning seems to be still more expressive, and is certainly more affecting. Some kinds of the locust are very small and light. Were the cicada not to be classed among the locust tribes, still the figure remains in all its force and beauty. The minutest of

those small insects becomes a burden to extreme old age, weighed down with a load of years, and worn with toils and cares, to the verge of existence. The powers and faculties of body and mind are equally debilitated, and the relish for the enjoyments of sense, which he once felt so keenly, is extinguished for ever.

Some insects live under a regular government, and, like the bee, submit to the authority of a chief; but the wise man observes, "The locusts have no king, yet they go forth by bands*." How just is this remark! The head of the column, when the army is not tossed and scattered by the winds, which often happens, is directed by their voracious desire of food; and the rest follow in long succession, under the influence of the same instinct; but the devastations they commit, are as methodical and complete, as if they acted under the strictest discipline.

In Barbary and Palestine, the locusts appear about the latter end of March. By the middle of April their numbers are so increased, that in the heat of the day they form themselves into large and numerous swarms, fly in the air like a succession of clouds; and, as the prophet Joel expresses it, "darken the sun." When a brisk gale happens to blow, so that these swarms are crowded by others, or thrown one upon another, the musing and intelligent traveller obtains a lively idea of the Psalmist's comparison: "I am tossed up and down like the locust†." In the month of May, when the ovaries of those insects are ripe and turgid, each of these swarms begins gradually to disappear, and retire into the plains, where they deposit their eggs. These are no sooner hatched in June, than each of the broods collect themselves into a compact body, sometimes extended more than a furlong on every side; and then marching directly towards the sea, they suffer nothing to escape them, eating up every thing that is green and juicy, from the tender and lowly vegetable, to the coarse leaf and bark of the

* Prov. xxx. 27.

† Ps. cix. 23.

vine and the pomegranate. In prosecuting their work of destruction, they keep their ranks like soldiers in order of battle, climbing as they advance, over every tree or wall that stands in their way; they enter into the very houses and bed chambers, like so many thieves. The inhabitants to stop their motions, dig a variety of pits and trenches all over their fields and gardens, which they fill with water, or with heath, stubble, and other combustible matter, which are set on fire upon the approach of the locust. But these contrivances are all to no purpose, for the trenches are quickly filled up, and the fires extinguished, by infinite swarms succeeding one another; while the front is regardless of danger, and the rear presses on so close, that a retreat is altogether impossible. A day or two after one of these broods is in motion, others are already hatched to march and glean after them, gnawing off the very bark, and the young branches of such trees as had before escaped with the loss only of their fruit and foliage; so justly have they been compared by the prophet to a great army.

The locust, it is supposed by an eminent traveller, who has been my guide in the preceding description, was the noisome beast, or the pernicious destructive animal, as the original words may be interpreted, which, with the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, made the four sore judgments, with which the prophet Ezekiel threatened Jerusalem. The Jews were allowed to eat them; and when sprinkled with salt, and fried, they are not unlike our fresh water cray fish. The Acridophagi must have preferred them to almost every other species of food, since they derived their name from their eating locusts. We learn from the valuable work of Dr Russell, that the Arabs salt and eat them as a delicacy. Locusts, were accordingly the common food of John, the precursor of Christ, while he remained in the wilderness. In feeding on that insect, the Baptist submitted to no uncommon privation, and practised no savage rigour, like many of the hermits who inhabited the deserts; but merely followed the abstemious mode of living, to which the

people were accustomed, in the less frequented parts of the country. Much unnecessary pains have been taken by some squeamish writers, to prove that the locusts which John used for food, were the fruit of a certain tree, and not the carcase of the insects distinguished by that name; but a little inquiry will fully clear up this matter, and shew, that however disgusting the idea of that kind of meat may appear to us, the orientals entertain a very different opinion. Many nations in the east, as the Indians of the Bashee islands, the Tonquinese, and the inhabitants of Madagascar, make no scruple to eat these insects, of which they have innumerable swarms, and prefer them to the finest fish *. The ancients affirm, that in Africa, Syria, Persia, and almost throughout Asia, the people commonly eat these creatures. Clenard, in a letter from Fez, in 1541, assures us, that he saw waggon loads of locusts brought into that city for food. Kirstenius, in his notes on Matthew, says, he was informed by his Arabic master, that he had often seen them on the river Jordan; that they were of the same form with ours, but larger; that the inhabitants pluck off their wings and feet, and hang the rest at their necks till they grow warm, and ferment; and then they eat them, and think them very good food. A monk, who had travelled into Egypt, asserts, that he had eaten of these locusts, and, that in the country they subsisted on them four months in the year.

The locust is employed in the book of Revelation, to symbolize the countless and savage hordes that fought under the banners of the Saracen princes: "And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth, and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power, --- and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man, --- and the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were, as it were crowns of gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. And they had hair as the hair of women; and their teeth were as the

* Dr Shaw's Trav.

teeth of lions. And they had breast-plates as it were breast-plates of iron, and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. And they had tails like scorpions, and there were stings in their tails, --- and they had a king over them *." This remarkable comparison is almost in every particular quite familiar to the Arabs. Niebuhr, in his discription of Arabia, informs us, that an Arab of the desert near Bassorah, mentioned to him a singular comparison of the locust with other animals. He regarded it as a jest of the Bedouin, and paid no attention to it, till it was repeated by another from Bagdad. He compared the head of the locust to that of the horse; its breast to that of the lion; its feet to those of the camel; its body to that of the serpent; its tail to that of the scorpion; its horns to the locks of hair of a virgin; and so of other parts. It has been remarked by almost every one who has paid attention to this branch of natural history, that the head of a locust bears a striking resemblance to that of a horse. The Greeks called it the horse of the earth. Accoutred for war, and mounted by a stern and bearded warrior, the Arabian charger has a majestic and terrible appearance; not less dreadful to the inhabitant of the east is the locust, in all the vigour of youth, ready to commence his destructive march. The Saracen furnished his horse with a silver bridle, and gilt trappings, and covered his neck and breast with plates of iron; it is therefore, not improbable, that he adorned his head with some ornament resembling a crown, to which the horns or antennæ of the locust may not improperly be compared. The neck of this formidable insect is also defended by a hard scaly substance, in the same manner as the neck of the Arabian war horse was defended by plates of iron. The Arabian horse is carefully taught to recognize his enemy in the field of battle, which he no sooner does, than he rushes upon him with the utmost violence, and attempts to tear him in pieces with his teeth. The teeth of the locust are very

* Rev. ix. 1—12.

sharp and strong. With what astonishing rapidity this insect devours every green thing, and scatters desolation over the fairest regions of the earth, has already been described; from whence it appears, that the comparison of the Saracen horse to the locust, is by no means inapplicable. Nor is the sound of their wings less remarkable; the inspired writer says, "the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle;" and travellers have stated, that "the passage of the locusts over their heads was like the noise of a great cataract."

The Scorpion.

The scorpion is one of the most loathsome objects in nature. It resembles a small lobster; its head appears to be joined and continued to the breast; it has two eyes in the middle of its head, and two towards the extremity, between which, come as it were, two arms, which are divided into two parts, like the claws of a lobster. It has eight legs proceeding from its breast, every one of which is divided into six parts, covered with hair, and armed with talons or claws. The belly is divided into seven rings, from the last of which the tail proceeds, which is divided into seven little heads, of which the last is furnished with a sting. In some are observed six eyes, and in others eight may be perceived. The tail is long, and formed after the manner of a string of beads, tied end to end, one to another; the last bigger than the others, and somewhat longer; to the end of which, are sometimes two stings, which are hollow, and filled with a cold poison, which it injects into the wound it inflicts. It is of a blackish colour, and moves sideways like a crab. It fixes violently with its snout, and by its feet, on the persons which it seizes, and cannot be disengaged without difficulty*.

To the northward of mount Atlas, the scorpion is not very hurtful, for the sting being only attended with a slight fever, the application of a little Venice treacle quickly assuages the

* Buffon.

pain. But the scorpion of Getulia, and most other parts of the Sahara, as it is larger, and of a darker complexion, so its venom is proportionably malignant, and frequently attended with death. In Syria it does not seem to be deadly, but occasions much inconvenience and suffering to the inhabitants. Whole companies are suddenly affected with vomitings, which is supposed to be produced by the poisonous matter which exudes from the skin of the scorpion, as it crawls over their kitchen utensils or provisions. Nor is it possible almost to avoid the danger; it is never at rest during the summer months, and so malicious is its disposition, that it may be seen continually flourishing its tail in which the sting is lodged, and striking at every object within its reach. So mischievous and hateful is this creature, that the sacred writers use it in a figurative sense for wicked, malicious, and crafty men. Such was the house of Israel to the prophet Ezekiel: "Thou dwellest," said Jehovah to his servant, "among scorpions." "No animal in the creation seems endued with a nature so irascible. When taken, they exert their utmost rage against the glass which contains them; will attempt to sting a stick, when put near them; will sting animals confined with them, without provocation; are the cruelest enemies to each other. Maupertuis put a hundred together in the same glass; instantly they vented their rage in mutual destruction, universal carnage! in a few days only fourteen remained, which had killed and devoured all the others. It is even asserted, that when in extremity or despair, the scorpion will destroy itself; he stings himself on the back of the head, and instantly expires. Surely Moses with great propriety, mentions scorpions among the dangers of the wilderness; and no situation can be conceived more hazardous than that of Ezekiel, who is said to dwell among scorpions; nor could a fitter contrast be selected by our Lord: 'Will a father give a scorpion to his child instead of an egg?'*" Our Saviour invested his disciples with power to tread on ser-

* Taylor's Calmet, vol. 4.—The Scorpion.

pents and scorpions *; by which may be denoted, power and authority to counteract and baffle every kind of agent, which the devil employs to vex and injure the church. The disciples of Antichrist, who, by their poisonous doctrines, injure or destroy the souls of men, are likewise compared to these dangerous animals: "And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power †." It is not therefore easy to know which to admire most, the folly or the tyranny of Rehoboam, who, in the very commencement of his reign, threatened to lay aside the whips with which his father had chastised the people of Israel, and rule them with scorpions; it was adding insult to cruelty. Nor is the injurious treatment much alleviated, although the idea of some interpreters were admitted, that the scorpion was the name of a kind of whip in use among the Jews, armed with points like the tail of that animal. The sting of the scorpion occasioned an excruciating pain, although death did not ensue. This is attested by John in the book of Revelation: "And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months; and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man ‡." And so intolerable is the agony, that it is added, "In those days shall men seek death and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them." If the Jews used a whip which they called a scorpion, it must have been because it occasioned a similar torment. If these things are properly considered, we shall cease to wonder at the instantaneous revolt of the ten tribes; for, it is not easy to conceive an address more calculated to rouse and exasperate the bitter passions of a high spirited people, than the puerile and wicked speech of Rehoboam.

Some writers consider the scorpion as a species of serpent, because the poison of it is equally powerful; hence the sacred writers commonly join the scorpion and the serpent together in

* Luke x. 19.

† Rev. ix. 3.

‡ Rev. ix. 5, 6.

their descriptions. Thus Moses, in his farewell address to Israel, reminds them that God "led them through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents and scorpions *." We find them again united in our Lord's commission to his disciples: "I give you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy;" and, in his directions concerning the duty of prayer: "If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he, for a fish, give him a serpent? or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion †?" In these words, a fish is compared with a serpent, and an egg with a scorpion, on account of their similarity. For to say nothing of the eel, which very much resembles the serpent, every fish moves in the water somewhat after the manner of a serpent upon the surface of the ground; hence the Hebrews give them both the common name of reptile.

The scorpion is compared with an egg, because it resembles an egg in shape; and one species, according to some natural historians, in colour, while all the different species resemble it in size. The desert between Judea and Egypt is exceedingly infested with serpents and scorpions, as the words of Moses to his people clearly prove: but in the southern regions of Judea, not far from the extremity of the lake Asphaltites, rises a mountain which derived its name from the numbers of scorpions which crawled around its feet, or lodged in its declivities: "Your border," said Moses to his people, "shall turn from the south to the ascent of Akrabbim;" that is, the ascent of scorpions, from which mountain the region contiguous to Idumea seems to have been latterly called Acrabatene. The Jewish historian, in the second book of his wars of the Jews, mentions another Acrabatene, lying in a very different part of the country beyond Samaria; and in Ptolemy, we find a city of Mesopotamia called Akraha, not far from Charran, and a region on the Tigris, named Acabene, for which the celebrated

* Deut. viii. 15.

† Luke x. 9. and xi. 11, 12.

Bochart proposes to read Acrabene; all of them alluding to the number of scorpions with which they were infested.

The Horse-leech.

This creature is only once mentioned in the holy Scriptures. It was known to the ancient Hebrews, under the name (עלוקה), Aluka, from the verb Alak, which in Arabic, signifies to adhere, stick close, or hang fast. The reason of the Hebrew name is evident; the leech sticks fast to the skin: and in several languages, its pertinacious adhesion is become proverbial. Horace celebrates it in this line.—“Non missuracutem, nisi plena cruoris hirudo.” An ancient author calls it the black reptile of the marsh; because, it is commonly found in marshy places. Its cruelty and thirst of blood, are noted by many writers, and indeed, are too prominent qualities in this creature to be overlooked.

“—— jam ego me vertam in hirudinem

Atque eorum exsugebo sanguinem.”

Plaut.

Long before the time of that ancient Roman, the royal Preacher introduced it in one of his Proverbs, to illustrate the cruel and insatiable cupidity of worldly men: “The horse-leech hath two daughters, crying, give, give*.” Several questions have been proposed in relation to this text; whether, for example, it is to be literally understood; and what the royal Preacher means by its two daughters. The renowned Bochart contends, that it cannot be literally understood, first, because its introduction into that proverb would be quite improper; second, because the horse-leech has no daughters, being generated of putrid matter in the bottom of the marsh. In answer to these reasons, it may be observed, that if it be connected with the preceding verse, the introduction is quite proper, and highly emphatical; indeed, we can scarcely conceive any thing more forcible and beautiful than the comparison. To the second objection, it is sufficient to reply, that Bochart has merely asserted the formation of the horse-leech from putrid mire;

* Prov. xxx. 16.

but the absurdity of equivocal generation, has already been considered. Mercer supposes, that the two daughters of the horse-leech are the forks of her tongue, by which she inflicts the wound; but this exposition is inadmissible, because she is destitute of that member, and acts merely by suction. Bochart, supposing that the clause where it is introduced, cannot with propriety be connected with any part of the context, considers it of course, as independent; and admitting the derivation of Aluka from Alak, to hang or be appended, interprets the term as denoting the termination of human life, appended as it were to the purpose of God, limiting the term of our mortal existence; and by consequence, that her two daughters are death and the grave, or, should these be thought nearly synonymous, the grave, where the body returns to its dust, and the world of spirits, where the soul takes up its abode. But with all deference to such high authority, this interpretation appears very forced and unnatural. The common interpretation seems in every respect, entitled to the preference. Solomon, having in the preceding verses, mentioned those that devoured the property of the poor, as the worst of all the generations he had specified, proceeds in the fifteenth verse, to state and illustrate the insatiable cupidity with which they prosecuted their schemes of rapine and plunder. As the horse-leech hath two daughters, cruelty and thirst of blood, which cannot be satisfied; so, the oppressor of the poor has two dispositions, cruelty and avarice, which never say they have enough, but continually demand additional gratifications.

The Snail.

The snail is in the Hebrew Scriptures, called שבילול, Sabelul, which the learned Bochart derives from שביל, a path, because the snail marks out his path with his slime, and so is called שבילול, the path maker; or, from ישב, to lodge, ב in, and לול, a winding shell, cochlea, the well known habitation which this animal carries about with him. Parkhurst is of opinion, that

a better account of the name may be deduced from the peculiar manner in which snails *thrust themselves forward* in moving, and from the force with which they adhere to any substance on which they light. The wise Author of nature, having refused them feet and claws to creep and climb, has compensated them in a way more commodious for their state of life, by the broad skin along each side of the belly, and the undulating motion observable there. By the latter, they creep; by the former, assisted by the glutinous slime emitted from their body, they adhere firmly and securely to all kinds of superficies, partly by the tenacity of their slime, and partly by the pressure of the atmosphere*. Thus, the snail wastes herself by her own motion, every undulation leaving some of her moisture behind; and in the same manner, the actions of wicked men prove their destruction. They may, like the snail, carry their defence along with them, and retire into it on every appearance of danger; they may confidently trust in their own resources, and banish far away the fear of evil: but the principles of ruin are at work within them, and although the progress may be slow, the result is certain. The holy Psalmist, guided by the Spirit of inspiration, prayed: "As a snail which melteth, let every one of them pass away†;" and Jehovah answered, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."

CHAP. IV.

OF SERPENTS



The Viper.

AMONG the reptiles mentioned in the sacred writings, the viper first claims our attention. This species of serpent is

* Derham's Phys., Theol.

† Ps. lvi. 3.

named אֶפְחָא *Aephæ*, in the books of the Old Testament, from a root which signifies to swell with blowing or puffing. It is one of the deadliest among the serpent tribes, as appears from the allusion of Zophar: "The viper's tongue shall slay the wicked;" that is, he shall as certainly die as if a viper had bitten him. Every touch of the viper's tongue is instant death; for when the barbarians in Malta saw the venomous reptile leap from the fire, and fasten upon the hand of Paul, "they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly *." We learn from Ovid, that the strongest animals are unable to resist the fatal energy of its poison:

"Parva necat morsu spatiosum vipera taurum."

The prophet Isaiah mentions it among the venomous reptiles, which, in extraordinary numbers, infest the land of Egypt: "From whence come the young and old lion, the viper and fiery flying serpent †." In illustrating the mischievous character of wicked men, and the ruinous nature of sin, he thus alludes to that dangerous creature again: "They hatch cockatrice eggs, and weave the spider's web: he that eateth of their eggs dieth; and that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper." The cockatrice here undoubtedly means the viper; for the egg of one creature never produces, by any management, one of a different species. When the egg is crushed, the young viper is disengaged, and leaps out, prepared for mischief. It may be objected, that the viper is not an oviparous but a viviparous animal; and consequently, the prophet must refer to some other creature. But it is to be remembered, that although the viper brings forth its young alive, they are hatched from eggs perfectly formed in the belly of the mother. Hence Pliny says of it, *Terrestrium eadem sola intra se parit ova unius coloris et molle ut piscium*. The viper alone of all terrestrial animals, produces within itself an egg of an uniform colour, and soft like the eggs or roe of fishes. This curious natural fact, reconciles the statement of the sacred writer, with

* Acts xxviii. 6.

† Isa. xxx. 6.

the truth of natural history. If by any means the egg of the viper be separated from the body, the phenomenon which the prophet mentions, may certainly take place.

The certain and speedy destruction which follows the bite of this creature, clearly proves the seasonable interposition of Almighty power for the preservation of the apostle Paul. Exasperated by the heat of the fire, the deadly reptile, leaping from the brush wood where it had concealed itself, fixed the canine teeth, which convey the poison into the wound which they had made, in his hand. Death must have been the consequence, had not the power of his God, which long before shut the lions' mouths, that they might not hurt the prophet, neutralised the viper's deadly poison, and miraculously preserved the valuable life of his servant. The supernatural agency of God is clearly taught in these words of the historian: "He shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm;" for he who had been wounded by a viper, could not be said to have been exempt from all harm. The disposition of the enraged reptile to take its full revenge, is intimated by the word *καθαπτεν*, to fasten and twine itself about the hand of Paul. Some interpreters render the term to seize upon, others to hang from the hand, and others to bite; but according to Bochart, it properly signifies to bind or entwine, a sense which seems entitled to the preference; for, when a serpent fastens on its prey, it endeavours uniformly to strangle the victim by winding round its body. The viper on this memorable occasion, exhibited every symptom of rage, and put forth all its powers; the deliverance of Paul, therefore, was not accidental, nor the effect of his own exertion, but of the mighty power of that Master whom he served, whose voice even the deadly viper is compelled to obey. This conclusion was in effect drawn by the barbarians themselves; for when "they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds and said, that he was a god:" they did not hesitate to attribute his preservation to divine power; they only mistook his real

character, not the true nature of that agency which was able to render the bite of the viper harmless.

This was to them a singular and most unexpected occurrence, for they looked when he should have swollen and fallen down dead suddenly. We are informed, by natural historians, that under the action of this dreadful poison, the whole body swells to an extraordinary size, and in about seven hours, death relieves the hopeless and agonized sufferer from his torments. These barbarians, it would seem, had been taught by their own experience, or the testimony of others, that the poison of the viper proves fatal in a much shorter time, for they waited some time in the confident expectation of seeing Paul suddenly expire. They knew, perhaps, what has been fully ascertained, that the bite of this animal is more pernicious, according to the place of its abode, the aliment on which it feeds, its age, the heat of the season when the wound is inflicted, and the degree of provocation it has received. On this occasion, it must have been exceedingly provoked; and the high state of excitement in which the Melitese saw it fastened upon the hand of the stranger, was, perhaps, the true and the only reason which induced them to believe the poison would produce a sudden effect.

To the deadly malice with which the scribes and Pharisees persecuted the blessed Redeemer, while he dwelt with men on earth, and his genuine followers after his ascension into heaven, John the Baptist pointedly alludes in these words: "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you from the wrath to come*!" And our Lord himself addresses them in the same terms: "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell†?" The people of Israel had been from the remotest times, a stiff-necked and rebellious race, whose heart was not right with God; and the scribes and Pharisees proved themselves the genuine brood of their wicked ancestors, enemies of God, and adversaries to all his genuine worshippers.

* Mat. iii. 7.

† Ch. xxiii. 33.

The Adder.

The adder was known to the ancient Hebrews under various names.—It is the opinion of some interpreters, that the word שחל Sachal, which in some parts of Scripture denotes a lion, in others means an adder, or some other kind of serpent. Thus, in the ninety-first Psalm, they render it the basilisk, “Thou shalt tread upon the adder and the basilisk, the young lion and the dragon thou shalt trample under foot*.” Indeed, all the ancient expositors agree, that some species of serpent is meant, although they cannot determine what particular serpent the sacred writer had in his eye. The learned Bochart thinks it extremely probable, that the holy Psalmist in this verse, treats of serpents only; and by consequence, that both the terms (שחל) Sachal and (כפיר) Chephir, mean some kind of snakes, as well as (פיתן) Phethan and (תנין) Thanin; because the coherence of the verse is by this view better preserved, than by mingling lions and serpents together, as our translators and other interpreters have commonly done. The union of lions, adders, and dragons, is not natural; nor is it easy to imagine what can be meant by treading upon the lion, and trampling the young lion under foot; for it is not possible in walking to tread upon the lion, as upon the adder, the basilisk, and other serpents.

As the term (שחל) Sachal, when applied to wild beasts, denotes a black lion; so in the present application, it means the black adder. The existence of this species, is thus attested by Virgil:

“Et tophus scaber et nigris excesa chelydri
Creta”

Many serpents are of a black colour, but some of them are much blacker than others. The Sachal, therefore, denotes the black snake, the colour of which is intensely deep.

Another name which the adder bears in Scripture is (עכשורב) Achsub. It occurs in the following description of the wicked:

* Psa, xci. 13.

“ They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent : adders’ poison is under their lips *.” The Chaldee renders it the poison of a spider ; but the most common interpretation, is that which our translators have adopted. Some, however, contend, that the asp is intended ; and in support of their opinion, quote the authority of many Greek and Latin interpreters, and what must be decisive with every Christian, the suffrage of an inspired apostle, who gives this version of the Hebrew text : “ The poison of asps is under their lips †.” The name in Hebrew, is derived from an Arabic verb which signifies to coil up ; which perfectly corresponds with the nature of this animal, for, in preparing to strike, it contracts itself into a spiral form, and raises its horrid head from the middle of the orb. It assumes the same form when it goes to *sleep*, coiling its body into a number of circles, with its head in the centre. .

This is the reason that in Greek, *Ασπίς* denotes a shield, as well as a serpent. Now, the Grecian shields were circular, as we learn from Virgil, who thus describes the orbicular eye of the shepherd Polyphemus :

“ Argolici clypei aut Phœbeæ lampadis instar.”

Æn. b. 3. l. 637.

But whether the name of the shield (*Ασπίς*) was derived from the serpent, or the name of the serpent from the form of the shield, it is of no consequence to determine, nor does it properly belong to this discussion.

Pethen (פֶּתֶן) is variously translated in our version ; but interpreters generally consider it as referring to the asp. Zophar alludes to it more than once in his description of a wicked man : “ Yet his meat in his bowels is turned, it is the gall of asps within him. . . . He shall suck the poison of asps : the vipers’ tongue shall slay him ‡.” The venom of asps is the most subtle of all ; it is incurable, and if the wounded part is not instantly amputated, speedily terminates the existence of the sufferer. To these circumstances, Moses evidently alludes in

* Psa. cxl. 4.

† Rom. iii. 13.

‡ Job xx. 14.

his character of the heathen: "Their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps *." To tread upon the asp is attended with extreme danger; therefore, to express in the strongest manner the safety which the godly man enjoys under the protection of his heavenly Father, it is promised, that he shall tread with impunity upon the adder and the dragon †. No person of his own accord approaches the hole of these deadly reptiles, for he who gives them the smallest disturbance, is in extreme danger of paying the forfeit of his rashness with his life. Hence, the prophet Isaiah, predicting the conversion of the Gentiles to the faith of Christ, and the glorious reign of peace and truth in those regions, which, prior to that period, were full of horrid cruelty, declares, "The sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea ‡." In the glowing descriptions of the Golden Age, with which the oriental writers, and the rapturous bards of Greece and Rome, entertained their contemporaries, the wild beasts grow tame, serpents resign their poison, and noxious herbs their deleterious qualities: all is peace and harmony, plenty and happiness.

—"Nec magnos metuent armenta leones.

Occidet et serpens, et fallax herba veneni

Occidet."

Vir. Ecl. iv. l. 22, 24, 25.

"Nor shall the herd dread huge overgrown lions.—The serpent shall die, and the poisonous fallacious plant shall die."

"Nec vespertinus circumgemit ursus ovile,

Nec intumescit ultra viperis humus."

Hor. Ep. b. 5, Car. 16. l. 51.

"Nor does the evening bear growl about the sheepfold, nor does the rising ground swell with vipers."

The soaring genius of these elegant writers, could reach no

* Deut. xxxii. 33.

† Psa. xci. 13.

‡ Isa. xi. 6—9.

higher than a negative felicity : but the inspired bard, far surpassing them in the beauty and elegance, and in the variety of imagery, with which he clothes the very same ideas, exhibits a glowing picture of positive and lasting happiness : “ The wolf and the leopard not only forbear to destroy the lamb and the kid, but even take their abode with them, and lie down together. The calf, and the young lion, and the fatling, not only come together, but also repose under the same covert, and are led quietly in the same band, and that by a little child. The cow and the she-bear, not only feed together, but even lodge their young ones, for whom they used to be most jealously fearful, in the same place. All the serpent kind is so perfectly harmless, that the sucking infant, and the newly weaned child, puts his hand on the basilisk’s den, and plays upon the hole of the aspic. The lion, not only abstains from preying on the weaker animals, but also becomes tame and domestic, and feeds on straw, like the ox. These are all beautiful circumstances, not one of which has been touched by the ancient poets*.”

That which the prophet foretold should happen in the latter days, we are informed by several respectable writers, is literally realized among the *Psylli* ; a people that inhabit a district in the land of Egypt. They have discovered a method of taming the aspic, which lives familiarly with their children, without doing them any harm. This remarkable fact is thus attested by Lucan :

———— “ *pignora gentis*

Psyllus habet, si quis tactos non horruit angues,

Si quis donatis lusit serpentibus infans.”

And *Ælian* says in his history, that the same people will throw their own children into a tub, or other large vessel full of asps, and that so far from hurting them, these terrible creatures sicken at their touch, and pine away †. When the celebrated Mr Bruce was in Egypt, he saw one of these people handle an aspic in the most familiar way ; he saw him permit the crea-

* Lowth on Isa. vol. 2. p. 114.

† *Æliani Hist. lib. 1. cap. 57.*

ture to bite his hand till the blood run down, without any dangerous effect, or his betraying the smallest alarm : and to shew him that the snake was not disabled, nor disinclined to exert its native energy upon a proper object, he caused it bite a chicken, which died almost immediately.

The incantation of serpents is one of the most curious and interesting facts in natural history. This wonderful art, which soothes the wrath, and disarms the fury of the deadliest snake, and renders it obedient to the charmer's voice, is not an invention of modern times ; for we discover manifest traces of it in the remotest antiquity. It is asserted, that Orpheus, who probably flourished soon after letters were introduced into Greece, knew how to still the hissing of the approaching snake, and to extinguish the poison of the creeping serpent. The Argonauts are said to have subdued by the power of song, the terrible dragon that guarded the golden fleece : Ἡδεῖν ἐνοπή θελῆσαι τείρας *. Ovid ascribes the same effect to the soporific influence of certain herbs, and magic sentences :

“Hunc postquam sparsit Lethæi gramine succi,
Verbaque ter dixit placidos facientia somnos.”

It was the custom of others to fascinate the serpent, by touching it with the hand. Of this method, Virgil takes notice in the seventh book of the *Æneid* :

“Spargere qui somnos cantuque manuque solebat.”

Silius Italicus, is still more express in his first book :

“Nec non serpentes diro exarmare veneno

Doctus Atyr, tactu que graves sopire chelydros.”

But it seems to have been the general persuasion of the ancients, that the principal power of the charmer lay in the sweetness of his music. Pliny says accordingly, that serpents were drawn from their lurking places by the power of music. Seneca held the same opinion :

“—— tracta Magicis cantibus

Squamea latebris turba desertis adest.”

* Apolonii Argon, lib. 4, v. 147.

Serpents, says Augustine, are supposed to hear and understand the words of the Marsi; so that, by their incantations, these reptiles, for the most part, sally forth from their holes.

The power of music was believed to expel the serpent's poison, and render its bite harmless:

“Vipereo generi et graviter spirantibus hydris,
Spargere qui somnos cantuque manuque solebat,
Mulcebat que iras et morsus arte levabat.

Æn. b. 7. l. 753.

“Who, by enchantment and *magical* operation, was wont to sprinkle *the dews of* sleep on the viper's race, and the noxious breathing hydra's.”

Isodorus entertained the same opinion, which he thus expresses:

“Marsos illesos esse carminum maleficiis.”

By the same means, or by the touch, it was believed, that the sufferings of those who had been bit, might be alleviated, and a complete cure accomplished. The sentiments of Virgil on this particular have been already stated. To his authority these pointed lines of Lucan may be added:

“pestis nigris inserta medullis

Excantata perit.”

The wonderful effect which music produces on the serpent tribes, is confirmed by the testimony of several respectable moderns. Adders swell at the sound of a flute, raising themselves up on the one half of their body, turning themselves round, beating proper time, and following the instrument. Their head, naturally round and long like an eel, becomes broad and flat like a fan*. The tame serpents, many of which, the orientals keep in their houses, are known to leave their holes in hot weather, at the sound of a musical instrument, and run upon the performer†. Dr Shaw had an opportunity of seeing a number of serpents keep exact time with the Dervishes in their circulatory dances, running over their heads and arms,

* Chardin.

† Greave's Trav.

turning when they turned, and stopping when they stopped*. The rattle snake acknowledges the power of music as much as any of his family ; of which the following instance is a decisive proof: When Chateaubriand was in Canada, a snake of that species entered their encampment ; a young Canadian, one of the party, who could play on the flute, to divert his associates, advanced against the serpent with his new species of weapon. " On the approach of his enemy, the haughty reptile curled himself into a spiral line, flattened his head, inflated his cheeks, contracted his lips, displayed his envenomed fangs, and his bloody throat ; his double tongue glowed like two flames of fire ; his eyes were burning coals ; his body, swoln with rage, rose and fell like the bellows of a forge ; his dilated skin assumed a dull and scaly appearance ; and his tail, which sounded the denunciation of death, vibrated with so great rapidity, as to resemble a light vapour. The Canadian now began to play upon his flute, the serpent started with surprise, and drew back his head. In proportion as he was struck with the magic effect, his eyes lost their fierceness, the oscillations of his tail became slower, and the sound which it emitted became weaker, and gradually died away. Less perpendicular upon their spiral line, the rings of the fascinated serpent were by degrees expanded, and sunk one after another upon the ground, in concentric circles. The shades of azure, green, white, and gold, recovered their brilliancy on his quivering skin, and slightly turning his head, he remained motionless, in the attitude of attention and pleasure. At this moment, the Canadian advanced a few steps, producing with his flute sweet and simple notes. The reptile, inclining his variegated neck, opened a passage with his head through the high grass, and began to creep after the musician, stopping when he stopped, and beginning to follow him again, as soon as he moved forward." In this manner he was led out of their camp, attended by a great number of spectators, both savages and Europeans, who could scarcely

* Shaw's Trav.

believe their eyes, when they beheld this wonderful effect of harmony. The assembly unanimously decreed, that the serpent which had so highly entertained them, should be permitted to escape*.

The serpent most common at Cairo, belongs to the viper class, and is undoubtedly poisonous. If one of them enter a house, the charmer is sent for, who uses a certain form of words. By this means, Mr Brown saw three serpents enticed out of the cabin of a ship, lying near the shore. The operator handled them, and put them into a bag. At other times, he saw the fascinated reptiles twist round the bodies of these charmers in all directions, without having had their fangs extracted, or broken, and without doing them any harm†. Adders and serpents will twist themselves round the neck and naked bodies of young children belonging to the charmers, and suffer them to escape unhurt. But, if any person who is ignorant of the art happens to approach them, their destructive powers immediately revive. At Surat, an Armenian seeing one of these charmers make an adder bite him, without receiving any other injury than the mere incision, boasted he could do the same; and causing himself to be wounded in the hand, died in less than two hours.

While the creature is under the influence of the charm, they sometimes break out the tooth which conveys the poison, and render it quite harmless: for the poison is contained in a bag, at the bottom of the fangs which lie flat in the mouth, and are erected only when the serpent intends to bite. The bag upon being pressed, discharges the poison through a hole or groove in the fang, formed to receive it, into the wound, which is at the same instant inflicted by the tooth. That all the teeth are not venomous, is evident from this circumstance, that the charmers will cause their serpents to bite them, till they draw blood, and yet the hand will not swell.

* Chateaubriand's Beauties of Christianity. See also a long and interesting account of the art of charming serpents in Mr Bruce's Travels.

† Brown's Trav. in Africa.

But on some serpents, these charms seem to have no power; and it appears from Scripture, that the adder sometimes takes precautions to prevent the fascination which he sees preparing for him; for the deaf adder shutteth her ear, and will not hear the voice of the most skilful charmer*. The method is said to be this; the reptile lays one ear close to the ground, and with his tail, covers the other, that he cannot hear the sound of the music; or he repels the incantation by hissing violently. The same allusion is involved in the words of Solomon: "Surely the serpent will bite without enchantment, and a babbler is no better†." The threatening of the prophet Jeremiah, proceeds upon the same fact: "I will send serpents (cockatrices) among you, which will not be charmed, and they shall bite you‡." In all these quotations, the sacred writers, while they take it for granted that many serpents are disarmed by charming, plainly admit, that the powers of the charmer are in vain exerted upon others. To account for this exception, it has been alleged, that in some serpents the sense of hearing is very imperfect, while the power of vision is exceedingly acute; but the most intelligent natural historians maintain, that the very reverse is true. In the serpent tribes, the sense of hearing is much more acute than the sense of vision. Pliny observes, that the serpent is much more frequently roused by the ear than by sight: "*Jam primum hebetes oculos huic malo dedit, eosque non in fronte ex adverso cernere sed in temporibus: itaque excitatur, sed sæpius auditu quam visu.*" In this part of his work, the ancient Naturalist discourses not concerning any particular species, but the whole class of serpents, asserting of them all, that Nature has compensated the dulness of their sight, by the acuteness of their hearing. Unable to resist the force of truth, others maintain, that the adder is deaf not by nature, but by design; for the Psalmist says, she shutteth her ear, and will not hear the voice of the charmer. But the phrase perhaps means no more than this, that some adders are

* Ps. lviii. 5, 6.

† Eccl. x. 11.

‡ Jer. viii. 17.

of a temper so stubborn, that the various arts of the charmer make no impression; they are like creatures destitute of hearing, or whose ears are so completely obstructed, that no sounds can enter. The same phrase is used in other parts of Scripture, to signify a hard and obdurate heart: "Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard *." It is used in the same sense by the prophet: "That stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil †." The righteous man remains as unmoved by the cruel and sanguinary counsels of the wicked, as if he had stopped his ears: and Virgil uses the same phrase, to express the determined insensibility of Æneas, to the urgent entreaties of Dido and her sister.

" ——— sed nullis ille movetur

Fletibus, aut voces ulias tractabilis audit.

Fata obstant, placidasque viri Deus obstruit aures."

In the same manner, the stubborn or infuriated aspic, as little regards the power of song, as if her sense of hearing were obstructed or destroyed.

If the serpent repel the charm, or is deaf to the song, the charmer, it is believed, exposes himself to great danger, the whole force of the incantation falling upon the head of its author, against whom the exasperated animal directs its deadliest rage.

"Interdum perit incantans si callida surdus

Adjuratoris contempsit murmura serpens." *Alcimus.*

But which of the serpent tribes have the power to repel the incantations of the charmer, or inject a poison which his art is unable to counteract, no ancient Greek writer has been able to discover, or has thought proper to mention. Ælian states, indeed, that the bite of an aspic admits of no remedy, the powers of medicine, and the arts of the charmer, being equally unavailing. But their omission has been amply supplied by the Arabian philosophers quoted by Bochart, our

* Prov. xxi. 13.

† Is. xxxiii. 15.

principal guide in this part of the work. These clear and accurate writers divide serpents into three classes. In the first, the force of the poison is so intense, that the sufferer does not survive their attack longer than three hours, nor does the wound admit of any cure, for they belong to the class of deaf or stridulous serpents, which are either not affected by music and other charms, or which, by their loud and furious hissing, defeat the purpose of the charmer. The only remedy in this case, is instantaneous amputation, or searing the wound with a hot iron, which extinguishes the virus, or prevents it from reaching the sanguiferous system. In this class they place the regulus, the basilisk, and the various kinds of asps, with all those, the poison of which is in the highest degree of intensity. This doctrine seems to correspond with the view which the psalmist and the prophet give us in the passages already quoted, of the adder and cockatrice, or basilisk. It is certain, however, from the authentic statements of different travellers, that some of those serpents, as the aspic and the basilisk, which the Arabians place on the list of deaf and untameable snakes, whose bite admits of no remedy, have been frequently subjected to the power of the charmer; nor is it necessary to refer the words of the inspired writers to this subject, for they nowhere recognize the classification adopted by the Arabian philosophers. The only legitimate conclusion to be drawn from their words, is, that the power of the charmer often fails, whether he try to fascinate the aspic, basilisk, or any other kind of serpent. In order to vindicate the sacred writers, it is not necessary to suppose, with the Arabians, that some species of serpents exist, which the charmer endeavours in vain to fascinate; for in operating upon the same species, the success of his incantations may be various*.

The Cockatrice, or Basilisk.

The basilisk was known to the ancient Hebrews under the names (צִפְּחָא) Tsipha, or (צִפְּחֹנִי) Tsiphoni. Our translators, un-

* Bochart's Sac. Zool. p. 394.

able, perhaps, to ascertain the precise meaning of these terms, at one time render them the adder, at another the cockatrice. "At the last, it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder*." "The sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den†." "Out of the serpents' root shall come forth a cockatrice‡." "They hatch cockatrice eggs, and weave the spider's web: he that eateth of their eggs dies; and that which is crushed, breaketh out into a viper§." "For behold I will send serpents (cockatrices) among you, which will not be charmed||." In all these passages, the adder, or the cockatrice, is the translation of the same original term. The basilisk is about three palms in length, its wound is incurable, and its powers of devastation so great, that the Chaldeans gave it the name of hurman, or the destroyer. At the sound of its voice, it is pretended all other serpents, struck with terror, instantly hide themselves in their dens, or under the sand.

"Sibilaque effundens omnes terrentia pestes." *Lucan.*

The sober statements of the natural historian attest the same fact, that by its hissing, the basilisk puts all the other serpents to flight. *Sibilo omnes fugat serpentes*, is the averment of Pliny; and many writers assert, that the breath of this terrible creature is fatal to those animals that inhale it, so that the basilisk kills before it bite. The caustic power of its breath, which, according to Solinus, extinguishes the plants, blasts the trees, and corrupts the air, has procured it the name of tsepha, from the Arabic verb tsapha, to scorch or burn.

This dreadful snake is not a native of Canaan; but as it abounds in the miry fields of Egypt, its existence and character must have been well known to the Jews, whose forefathers resided so long in that country, and who had frequent intercourse with the Egyptians from the time of their settlement in Canaan.

* Prov. xxiii. 32.

† Isa. xi. 8.

‡ Isa. xiv. 29.

§ Ch. lix. 5.

|| Jer. viii. 17.

Like every other species of serpent, the basilisk is oviparous; and it appears, from the words of the prophet, that its eggs may be mistaken for those of birds, and unwarily used as wholesome food. Such, the prophet observes, would prove fatal, while those which are crushed would produce a serpent. This entirely accords with the nature of this reptile. Labat says, he crushed some of the eggs of a large female serpent, and found several young in each egg, which were no sooner freed from the shell, than they coiled themselves into attitudes of attack, and were ready to spring on whatever came in their way. Bartholin dissected serpent's eggs, which, he says, are only hatched in the open air, and fail in a place too close or too hot. If the eggs of serpents are broken, the little serpent is found rolled up in a spiral form. It appears motionless during some time; but if the term of its exclusion be near, it opens its jaws, inhales, at several respirations, the air of the atmosphere, its lungs fill, it stretches itself, and, moved by this impetus, it begins to crawl*.

One of the most forcible arguments against inebriety, which can be presented to the consideration of an oriental, is to inform him that it is a vice destructive as the poisonous breath, or deadly tang, of the basilisk. It is stated with great force and beauty by Solomon in these words: "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last, it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder." The juice of the grape is justly numbered among the most valuable blessings which the God of nature has bestowed upon the children of men, and when used in moderation, invigorates the body, exhilarates the spirits, relieves in sickness, and cheers in prosperity; but, like every blessing on earth, it may be abused to the gratification of vicious propensities, and then the poison, even of the basilisk, is not more destructive to man. Its ruinous effects cannot be better expressed than in the words of Solomon himself: "Wine is a

* Taylor's Calmet, vol. 4.

mocked, strong drink is raging; and whoso is deceived thereby is not wise *." "Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babblings? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine: they that go to seek mixed wine †." In a subsequent verse, he represents this vice as the sure precursor of the grossest crimes; and how truly, the history of all nations and ages can attest: "Thine eyes shall behold strange women; and thine heart shall utter perverse things. Yea, thou shalt be as one that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or he that lieth upon the top of a mast. They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again ‡." Excess never fails to inflame and pollute, to besot and stupify the mind. It renders its miserable victim unruly, and incoherent in his conversation; rash and heedless in his actions; it enervates every power and faculty, and, at last, extinguishes all sense of virtue and honour and decency.

The faith and patience of God's people in the days of Isaiah, were sustained with a promise which has already been explained, that the weaned child should "put his hand on the cockatrice den," and experience no harm. It is only necessary to add, that the word (מאורה,) occurs in this sense no where else in the sacred writings. This has produced a great diversity of sentiment among interpreters; Jerome, and many others after him, render it cavern; the Greeks, a bed; but the Chaldee Paraphrast, deriving it from (אור) Or, to shine, to be clear or lucid, translate it the pupil of the eye; paraphrasing the words of the prophet: "the weaned child shall put his hand on the sight of the basilisk, on the pupil of his eye, without harm or danger."

In Egypt, and other oriental countries, a serpent was the common symbol of a powerful monarch; it was embroidered on their robes, and blazoned on their diadem, to signify their ab-

* Prov. xx. 1.

† Ch. xxiii. 29, 30.

‡ Ch. xxiii. 33, 34, 35.

solute power and invincible might, and that, as the wound inflicted by the basilisk is incurable, so, the fatal effects of their displeasure were neither to be avoided nor endured. These are the allusions involved in the address of the prophet, to the irreconcilable enemies of his nation: "Rejoice not thou, whole Palestina, because the rod of him that smote thee is broken; for out of the serpents' roots shall come forth a cockatrice, and his fruit shall be a fiery flying serpent*." Uzziah, the king of Judah, had subdued the Philistines; but, taking advantage of the weak reign of Ahaz, they again invaded the kingdom of Judea, and reduced some cities in the southern part of the country under their dominion. On the death of Ahaz, Isaiah delivers this prophecy, threatening them with a more severe chastisement from the hand of Hezekiah, the grandson of Uzziah, by whose victorious arms they had been reduced to sue for peace, which he accomplished, when "he smote the Philistines, even unto Gaza, and the borders thereof†." Uzziah, therefore, must be meant by the rod that smote them, and by the serpent from whom should spring the fiery flying serpent, that is Hezekiah, a much more terrible enemy than even Uzziah had been. But the symbol of regal power which the oriental kings preferred to all others, was the basilisk. This fact is attested by its Arabian name *Melecha*, from the Hebrew verb *Malach*, to reign; from its Greek name *βασιλισκος*, and its Latin name *Regulus*: all of which, it is asserted, referred to the conspicuous place it occupied among the regal ornaments of the east. The basilisk is of a reddish colour, and its head is decorated with a crest in the form of a crown; it is not entirely prostrate, like other serpents, but moves along with its head and half the body erect; the other parts sweep the ground behind, "and wind its spacious back in rolling spires." Such were the serpents, that, from Tenedos, stretched along the smooth surface of the sea, and shot forward to the Trojan shore.

* Isa. xiv. 29.

† 2 Kings xviii. 8.

“Pectora quorum inter fluctus arrectæ, jubæque
Sanguinæ exsuperant undus; pars cetera pontum
Pone legit, sinuatque immensa volumine terga.”

Virg. b. 2. l. 206.

All the other species of serpents are said to acknowledge the superiority of the basilisk, by flying from its presence, and hiding themselves in the dust. It is also supposed to live longer than any other serpent; the ancient heathens therefore pronounced it immortal, and placed it in the number of their deities; and because it had the dangerous power, in general belief, of killing with its pestiferous breath the strongest animals, it seemed to them invested with the power of life and death. It became, therefore, the favourite symbol of kings; and was employed by the prophet, to symbolize the great and good Hezekiah, with strict propriety.

The prophet, however, sometimes uses it in a bad sense, as the symbol of wicked and ungodly men: “They hatch the eggs of the basilisk, and weave the spider’s web; he that eateth of their eggs, dieth; and that which is crushed, breaketh out into a viper*.” By the cockatrice eggs, the prophet means atrocious crimes, which are conceived in the mind, and rise into maturity in the life and conduct. In this verse, the same actions are compared to the eggs of the basilisk and the viper; but it will not therefore follow, that these are only names of the same creature. The prophet’s design manifestly is, to represent the same wicked actions by various kinds of serpents, the more deeply to impress the mind with the turpitude of their nature, and the bitterness of their consequences. Many instances of this manner of writing, occur in the sacred volume. Thus, in relation to the heathen, Moses observes, “Their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps†.” And Zophar asserts of a wicked man, “He shall suck the poison of asps; the viper’s tongue shall slay him‡.”

The only other allusion to the basilisk, occurs in the pro-

* Isa lix. 5.

† Deut. xxxii. 33.

‡ Job xx. 16.

phesies of Jeremiah, and is couched in these terms: "For behold, I will send serpents (cockatrices) among you, which will not be charmed, and they shall bite you, saith the Lord*." These terrible creatures, in this passage, symbolize the Assyrian armies under the command of Nebuchadnezzar,—armies so inured to blood, and so intent on spoil, that neither tears nor prayers availed to soften their iron hearts, and bind their rapacious hands. The people of Israel had, by their iniquities, made God their enemy, and therefore had no mercy to expect from the ministers of his vengeance.

The Cerastes, or Horned Snake.

The only allusion to this species of serpent in the sacred volume, occurs in the valedictory predictions of Jacob, where he describes the character and actions of Dan and his posterity: "Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder (אֲשֵׁרִי) in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward†." It is indisputably clear, that the patriarch intended some kind of serpent; for the circumstances will not apply to a freebooter watching for his prey. It only remains to investigate the species to which it belongs. The principal care of the Jewish writers, is to ascertain the etymology of the name, about which their sentiments are much divided. The Arabian writers quoted by Bochart inform us, that the Sephi-phon is a most pernicious reptile, and very dangerous to man. It is of a sandy colour, variegated with black and white spots. The particulars in the character of Dan, however, agree better with the Cerastes, or horned snake, than with any other species of serpent. It lies in wait for passengers in the sand, or in the rut of the wheels on the highway. From its lurking place, it treacherously bites the horse heels, so that the rider falls backward, in consequence of the animal's hinder legs becoming almost immediately torpid by the dreadful activity of the poison. The Cerastes is equally formidable to man and the lower animals; and the more dangerous, because it is not easy to

* Jer. viii. 17.

† Gen. xlix. 17.

distinguish him from the sand in which he lies ; and he never spares the helpless traveller who unwarily comes within his reach.

“ He moves,” says Mr Bruce, “ with great rapidity, and in all directions, forward, backward, and sideways. When he inclines to surprise any one who is too far from him, he creeps with his side towards the person, and his head averted, till, judging his distance, he turns round, springs upon him, and fastens upon the part next to him ; for it is not true what is said, that the Cerastes does not leap or spring. I saw one of them at Cairo, crawl up the side of a box, in which there were many, and there lie still as if hiding himself, till one of the people who brought them to us, came near him, and though in a very disadvantageous posture, sticking, as it were, perpendicular to the side of the box, he leaped near the distance of three feet, and fastened between the man’s fore-finger and thumb, so as to bring the blood. The fellow shewed no signs of either pain or fear : and we kept him with us full four hours, without applying any sort of remedy, or his seeming inclined to do so.

“ To make myself assured that the animal was in its perfect state, I made the man hold him by the neck, so as to force him to open his mouth, and lacerate the thigh of a pelican, a bird I had tamed, as big as a swan. The bird died in about thirteen minutes, though it was apparently affected in fifty seconds ; and we cannot think it was a fair trial, because a very few minutes before, it had bit, and so discharged a part of its virus, and it was made to scratch the pelican by force, without any irritation or action of its own.”

These serpents have always been considered as extremely cunning, both in escaping their enemies and seizing their prey : they have even been called insidious ; a character which, from the preceding statement, they seem to deserve. The orientals call him the *lier in ambush* ; for, in this manner, both the Seventy and Samaritan render the text in Genesis ; and this ap-

pellation well agrees with his habits. Pliny says, that the Cerastes hides its whole body in the sand, leaving only its horns exposed, which attract birds, who suppose them to be grains of barley, till they are undeceived, too late, by the darting of the serpent upon them. Ephraim, the Syrian, also mentions a kind of serpents whose heads only are seen above the ground*.

Like the Cerastes, Dan was to excel in cunning and artifice, to prevail against his enemies, rather by his policy in the cabinet than by his valour in the field. But all the Jewish expositors refer the words of Jacob to Samson, who belonged to that tribe, and was undoubtedly the most illustrious personage of whom they could boast. This remarkable man, Jehovah raised up to deliver his chosen people, not so much by his valour, although his actions clearly shewed, that he was by no means deficient in personal courage, as by his artful and unexpected stratagems. This interpretation has been adopted by several Christian expositors; while it has been opposed by others as a needless refinement. It is unnecessary, and perhaps improper, to restrict the prediction to Samson, when it can with equal propriety be applied to the whole tribe. Whether the words of Jacob, in this instance, were meant to express praise or blame, it may be difficult to determine; but, if the deceitful and dangerous character of the Cerastes, to which Dan is compared, be duly considered, the latter is more probable.

The Seraph, or Fiery Flying Serpent.

The seraph, to a biblical student, is one of the most interesting creatures that has yet fallen under our notice. It bears the name of an order among the hosts of heaven, whom Isaiah beheld in vision, placed above the throne of Jehovah in the temple; the brazen figure of this serpent, is supposed to be a type of our blessed Redeemer, who was for our salvation lifted up upon the cross, as the serpent was elevated in the camp of Israel, for the preservation of that people. It is the only species of serpent which the Almighty Creator has provided with

* Taylor's Calmet, vol. 4,

wings, by means of which, instead of creeping or leaping, it rises from the ground, and, leaning upon the extremity of its tail, moves with great velocity. It is a native of Egypt, and the deserts of Arabia; and receives its name from the Hebrew verb *saraph*, which signifies to burn, in allusion to the violent inflammation which its poison produces, or rather its fiery colour, which the brazen serpent was intended to represent.

Bochart is of opinion, that the seraph is the same as the *hydrus*, or, as Cicero calls it, the serpent of the waters. For, in the book of Isaiah, the land of Egypt is called the region from whence come the viper and flying seraph, or burning serpent. *Ælian* says, they come from the deserts of Libya and Arabia, to inhabit the streams of the Nile; and that they have the form of the *hydrus*.

The existence of winged serpents is attested by many writers of modern times. A kind of snakes were discovered among the Pyrenees, from whose sides proceeded cartilages in the form of wings; and Scaliger mentions a peasant who killed a serpent of the same species which attacked him, and presented it to the king of France. Le Blanc, as quoted by Bochart, says, at the head of the lake Chiamay, are extensive woods and vast marshes, which it is very dangerous to approach, because they are infested by very large serpents, which, raised from the ground on wings resembling those of bats, and leaning on the extremity of their tails, move with great rapidity. They exist, it is reported, about these places in so great numbers, that they have almost laid waste the neighbouring province. And, in the same work, Le Blanc affirms, that he had seen some of them of immense size, which, when hungry, rushed impetuously on sheep and other tame animals.

But the original term *מְעַרְפָּה* *Meopheph*, does not always signify flying with wings; it often expresses vibration, swinging backwards and forwards, a tremulous motion, a *fluttering*; and this is precisely the motion of a serpent, when he springs from one tree to another. Niebuhr mentions a sort of serpents

at Bassorah, which they call *Hcie thiare*. “They commonly keep upon the date trees; and as it would be laborious for them to come down from a very high tree, in order to ascend another, they twist themselves by the tail to a branch of the former, which making a spring by the motion they give it, throws them to the branches of the second. Hence it is, that the modern Arabs call them *flying serpents*, *Heie thiare*. Admiral Anson also speaks of the *flying serpents*, that he met with at the island of Quibo; but, which were *without wings*.” From this account it may be inferred, that the flying serpent mentioned in the prophet, was of that species of serpents which, from their swift darting motion, the Greeks call *Acontias*, and the Romans, *Jaculus*.

The original phrase will bear another interpretation, which, perhaps, approaches still nearer the truth. The verb חִסְפָּה חִסְפָּה, sometimes means to sparkle, to emit coruscations of light. In this sense, the noun חִסְפָּה theepha, frequently occurs in the sacred volume; thus Zophar says: “The coruscation (חִסְפָּה) shall be as the morning*.” The word in the verse under consideration, may therefore refer to the ruddy colour of that serpent, and express the sparkling of the blazing sun-beam upon its scales, which are extremely brilliant.

The seraph is classed by the Hebrews, among those animals which emit an offensive odour; which corresponds with the character given of the hydrus by the poet: “*graviter spirantibus hydris*.” This circumstance is confirmed by Ælian, who states, that in Coreyra, the hydræ turn upon their pursuers, and exhale from their lungs an air so noisome, that they are compelled to desist from the attack.

It is an obvious objection to these arguments, that the hydri are produced, and reared in marshy places; not in burning and thirsty deserts, where the people of Israel murmured because they could find no water. But, although that people might find no water to drink, it will not follow, that the desert con-

* Job. xi. 17. See also Isa. lviii. 8. Amos iv. 13, &c.

tained no marshy place, or muddy pool, where the hydri might lurk. Besides, it is well known, that when water fails, these serpents do not perish, but become chersydri, that is seraphim, or burners. These chersydri, it is extremely probable, were the serpents which bit the rebellious Israelites: and in this state they were more terrible instruments of divine vengeance; for, exasperated by the want of water, and the intense heat of the season, they injected a deadlier poison, and occasioned to the miserable sufferer more agonizing torments. The time of the year when Jehovah sent these serpents among his people, proves that this is no vain conjecture. According to Nicander, the hydri become chersydri, and beset the path of the traveller, about the dog days. Now, Aaron died on the first day of the fifth month, that is, the month Abib, which corresponds with the nineteenth day of July. The Israelites mourned for him thirty days: immediately after which, they fought a battle with Arad, the Canaanite, and destroyed his country: then recommencing their journey, they murmured for want of water, and the serpents were sent. This, then, must have happened about the end of August; the season when the hydri become seraphim, and inflict the most cruel wounds. Nor is it a fact, that the frightful solitudes which Israel traversed, were totally destitute of water; for, in their fourth journey they came to the river Arnon; in the fifth, to Beer, a well greatly celebrated in Scripture; and soon after the death of Aaron, they arrived at a region watered by numerous streams*. In these irriguous places, which were at no great distance from the camp of Israel, the hydri might be produced, and sent to chastise the rebellious tribes. The words of Moses also seem to countenance the idea, that the hydri employed on this occasion, were not generated on the spot, but sent from a distance: "And the Lord sent fiery serpents, or seraphim, among the people†." From these words it is natural to conclude, that they came from that "land of rivers," through which the congregation had lately

* Numb. xxi. 10, 17, 18. Deut. x. 7.

† Numb. xxi. 6.

passed. Nor will this be reckoned too long a journey, when it is recollected, that they travel from both the Libyan and Arabian deserts, to the streams of the Nile.

They inflicted on this memorable occasion, an appropriate chastisement on the perverse tribes. That rebellious people had opened their mouth against the heavens; they had sharpened their tongues like serpents; and the poison of asps was under their lips: therefore, they were made to suffer, by the burning poison of a creature which they so nearly resembled.

The Dragon.

In Hebrew, the word (חַי) Thannin signifies, either a dragon or a whale. As the name of a serpent, it frequently denotes one of any species; as when the rod of Moses is said to have been turned (לחַי) into a serpent. But, in its more strict and appropriate application, it is the proper name of the dragon; which differs from the serpent chiefly in its size. "Three kinds of dragons were formerly distinguished in India. 1. Those of the hills and mountains. 2. Those of the valleys and caves. 3. Those of the fens and marshes. The first is the largest, and covered with scales resplendent as burnished gold. They have a kind of beard hanging from their lower jaw, their aspect is frightful, their cry loud and shrill, their crest bright yellow, and they have a protuberance on their heads, as the colour of a burning coal. Those of the flat country, are of a silver colour, and frequent rivers, to which the former never come. Those of the marshes are black, slow, and have no crest. Their bite is not venomous, though the creatures be dreadful." This description agrees in every particular with the boa, which Taylor justly considers as the proper dragon*.

"The BOA," says De la Cépède, "is among serpents, what the lion or the elephant is among quadrupeds; he commonly reaches twenty feet in length: and to this species we must refer those described by travellers, as lengthened to forty or fifty feet. Kircher mentions a serpent forty palms in length; and

* Taylor's Calmet, vol. 3. Hund. 4 and 5.

such a serpent is referred to, by Job Ludolph, as existing in Ethiopia. Jerome, in his life of Hilarion, denominates such a serpent *draco*, a dragon; saying, they were called *Boas*, because they could swallow (boves) beeves, and waste whole provinces." The enormous bulk of this formidable animal, as described by the ancients, indeed exceeds all belief. The dragon, which in Roman history, opposed the march of Regulus, near Attica, was an hundred and twenty feet in length: its scales were so strong and compact, that the whole army attacked it with their darts and javelins in vain, and were at last reduced to advance against the monster, with their balistæ, and other engines of war, as if they were storming a fortified city. It appears, however, to be certain, from the various accounts of it, by the most respectable writers, that it far surpasses all other serpents in size. "At Batavia, was taken a serpent, which had swallowed an entire stag, of a large size: one taken at Banda, had in the same manner swallowed a negro woman." Baldeus in Churchhill, vol. 3. p. 732. "Leguat, in his Travels, says, there are serpents fifty feet long, in the island of Java. At Batavia, they still keep the skin of one, which, though but twenty feet in length, is said to have swallowed a young maid whole." Barbot, in Churchhill, vol. 5. p. 560.

"The serpent, guaku or liboya (boa), is unquestionably the biggest of all serpents; some being eighteen, twenty-four, nay thirty feet long, and of the thickness of a man in the middle. The Portuguese call it *Kobze de hado*, or the roe-buck serpent; because it will swallow a whole roe-buck, or other deer; and this is performed by sucking it through the throat, which is pretty narrow, but the belly vastly big. Such an one, I saw near *Paraiba*, which was thirty feet long, and as big as a barrel. Some negroes accidentally saw it swallow a roe-buck, whereupon thirteen musqueteers were sent out, who shot it, and cut the roe-buck out of its belly --- It is not venomous --- This serpent being a very devouring creature, greedy of prey, leaps from among the hedges and woods, and standing upright

on its tail, wrestles both with men and wild beasts : sometimes it leaps from the trees upon the traveller, whom it fastens on, and beats the breath out of his body with its tail." Nieuhoff, in Churchhill, vol. 2. p. 13*.

From this account of the boa, Taylor thinks it extremely probable, that the apostle John had it in his eye, when he described the apocalyptic dragon. The boa or dragon of antiquity, was a serpent of prodigious size ; the prevailing colour in the boa is red ; which was also the colour most conspicuous in the dragon of antiquity.

"Serpitis aurato nitidi fulgore dracones." *Lucan.*

The portentous dragon in the second book of the Iliad, has the same hue ; and what is remarkable, it is described nearly in the words which the Holy Spirit dictated, long after the days of Homer, to his servant in Patmos.

Ενθ' εφ'ανη μεγα σηµα δρακων επι νωτα δαφνοινος

Σμερδαλιος πον ε αυτος Ολυμπιος ηκε φωσδδε.

Il. b. 2. l. 308.

"And there appeared another wonder in heaven, and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads." The seven heads are certainly allegorical ; but even this part of the representation is founded at least in natural appearances ; for it is well known, that there is a species of snake, called amphisbenæ or double headed, although one of them is at the tail of the animal, and is only apparent. A kind of serpent indeed, is so often found with *two heads growing from one neck*, that some have fancied it might form a species ; but we have as yet, no sufficient evidence to warrant such a conclusion. Admitting, however, that a serpent with two heads is an unnatural production, for this very reason it might be chosen by the Spirit of God, to be a kind of prototype of the apocalyptic monster. The apocalyptic dragon had ten horns ; a circumstance which seems to refer to the horned serpent, the boa, or proper dragon, having no horn.

* Taylor's Calmet, vol. 4.

The apocalyptic dragon had on every head a crown; the boa has a crest of bright yellow, and a protuberance on his head, in colour like a burning coal, which naturally enough suggest the idea of a crown. In all these instances, it is presumed, the inspired writer alludes either to historical facts, or natural appearances. The remaining particulars refer to facts in the history of the boa or other serpents. In the book of Revelation, the great red dragon *stood* before the woman, ready to swallow her child: when the boa meets his adversary, he *stands* upright on his tail, and attacks with dreadful rage, both man and beast. The tail of the great red dragon "drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth:" the boa frequently kills his victim with a stroke of his tail. STEEDMAN mentions an adventure in his *Expedition to Surinam*, which furnishes a very clear and striking illustration of this part of our subject. It relates to one of these large serpents, which, though it certainly differs from the red dragon of Asia and Africa, combines several particulars connected with our purpose. He had not gone from his boat above twenty yards through mud and water, when he discovered a snake rolled up under the fallen leaves and rubbish of the trees; and so well covered, that it was some time before he distinctly perceived the head of the monster, distant from him not above sixteen feet, moving its forked tongue, while its eyes, from their uncommon brightness, appeared to emit sparks of fire. He now fired; but missing the head, the ball went through his body, when the animal struck round, and with such astonishing force, as to cut away all the underwood around him with the facility of a scythe mowing grass, and by flouncing his tail, caused the mud and dirt to fly over his head to a considerable distance. He returned in a short time to the attack, and found the snake a little removed from his former station, but very quiet, with his head as before, lying out among the fallen leaves, rotten bark, and old moss. He fired at him immediately; and now, being but slightly wounded, he sent up

such a cloud of dust and dirt, as our author declares, he never saw but in a whirlwind. At the third fire, the snake was shot through the head; all the negroes present, declared it to be but a young one, about half grown, although on measuring, he found it twenty-two feet and some inches, and its thickness, about that of his black boy, who might then be about twelve years old.

These circumstances account for the sweeping destruction which the tail of the apocalyptic dragon effected among the stars of heaven. The allegorical incident, has its foundation in the nature and structure of the literal dragon.

The only other circumstance which requires explanation, is the *flood of water* ejected by the dragon, after he had failed in accomplishing the destruction of the woman and her seed. The venom of poisonous serpents, is commonly ejected by a perforation in the fangs, or cheek teeth, in the act of biting. We learn, however, from several facts mentioned by Calmet, that "serpents have a power of throwing out from their mouth, a quantity of fluid of an injurious nature." The quantity cast out by the great red dragon, is in proportion to his immense size, and is called a flood or stream, which the earth, helping the woman, opened her mouth to receive. "Gregory, the friend of Ludolph, says in his history of Ethiopia, 'We have in our province, a sort of serpent as long as the arm. He is of a glowing red colour, but somewhat brownish.—This animal has an offensive breath, and ejects a poison so venomous and stinking, that a man or beast within reach of it, is sure to perish quickly by it, unless immediate assistance be given.'"

"At *Mouree*, a great snake, being half under a heap of stones and half out, a man cut it in two, at the part which was out from among the stones; and as soon as the heap was removed, the reptile turning, made up to the man, and *spit such venom into his face, as quite blinded him*, and so he continued some days, but at last recovered his sight." Barbot, in Churchhill, vol. 5. p. 213, quoted by Calmet, vol. 4.

The prophet Jeremiah alludes also to the hideous voracity of the boa, where he predicts the destruction of Babylon, the cruel oppressor of his people: "Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, hath swallowed me up; he has filled his belly with my delicacies *." The same writer, in his description of a severe famine, represents the wild ass upon the summit of a rock, "snuffing up the wind like dragons †." Nor do these terrible reptiles content themselves with catching the passing breeze; they are said to suck from the air, the birds that fly above them, by the strength of their breathing. When the ancient Hebrews observed the dragons erect, and with expanded jaws fetching a deep inspiration, they interpreted the circumstance as if with their eyes lifted up to heaven, they complained to their Maker of their miserable condition, that hated by all creatures, and confined to the burning and sterile deserts, they dragged out a tedious and miserable existence. It was perhaps to some idea of this kind that Job referred, when, bemoaning the hardness of his lot, he complained: "I am a brother to dragons, and a companion of owls ‡." He was unable to associate with mankind; cut off from the comforts of life, and doomed to wear out the rest of his days in poverty and wretchedness. The prophet Micah has the same allusion in the day of his adversity, to the habits of that reptile: "I will make a wailing like the dragons, and mourning as the owls §." He may refer also to its hissing, which Ælian says is so loud, that it alarms and terrifies every creature within hearing.

Pliny, and many other writers affirm, that the dragon has no poison; but Homer seems to have entertained the opinion, that he became envenomed by the noxious herbs which he devoured.

Ὡς δὲ δράκων ἐπὶ χεῖρ ὀφειζέρος ἀνδρᾶ μὲνῃσι

Βεβρωκὼς κακὰ φάρμακα.

II.

Ælian says in his history, that when the dragon meditates an

* Jer. li. 34.

† Ch. xiv. 6.

‡ Job xxx. 29.

§ Ch. i. 8.

attack on man, or one of the lower animals, he feeds on deleterious roots. Other ancient writers affirm, that the poison of the dragon is natural to him, and depends upon no adventitious circumstances, and that it is extremely active. Its envenomed tooth is thus celebrated by Lucan,

“ Vos quoque qui cunctis innoxia numina terris,
Serpitis aurato nitidi fulgore dracones,
Pestiferos ardens facit Africa.”

So deadly is the poison of the serpent which they called the dragon, that the barbarous warriors of antiquity, to secure the destruction of their enemies in battle, dipped in it the points of their arrows.

“ Aurea tela quibus, de sanguine tincta draconis,
Mortifero splendore micant.” *Prudentius.*

As the boa is well known to have no poison, these ancient writers must have referred to some other huge and destructive animal, to which they gave the name of the dragon.

These testimonies vindicate the correctness of Moses, who mentions in his dying song, “ the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps ;” or the venerable lawgiver more probably meant, the poison of any large serpent, which the comprehensive sense of the original term sufficiently warrants.

The silent and barren wilderness is the chosen haunt of the dragon. It is on this account, the prophets of Jehovah, in predicting the fall of populous cities, so frequently declare, “ they shall become the habitation of dragons ;” by which they mean to threaten them with complete and perpetual desolation. The same allusion is involved in the complaint of the Psalmist : “ Thou hast broken us in the place of dragons ;” or, as Aquila not improperly renders it, in the place which cannot be inhabited.

But although the dragon often inhabits the dry and barren waste, yet, when at liberty to choose, he more willingly fixes his residence in the irriguous valley. What the prophet therefore asserts concerning the mystical, is equally true when applied to

the real dragon: "The beast of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the owls; because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen*." The dragon well at Jerusalem, mentioned by Nehemiah, seems to have taken its name from one of these snakes having fixed his residence there, during the long desolation of that city.

In the book of Revelation, the devil is called the "Old Serpent," probably in allusion to the long course of years through which it is believed that serpents in general, and particularly the dragon, protract their existence. Nor is the dragon a name given to every wicked spirit, but seems to be appropriated to Satan, that arch fiend who beguiled our first mother; and designed to intimate, that he holds the same rank among apostate spirits, as the dragon among prostrate serpents: that he is a most subtle and cruel tempter, and that none whom he has marked for his prey, can escape by his own wisdom and power. Entering into the body of a serpent, most probably the great red dragon or *boa*, he seduced the first pair from their allegiance, involving them and all their posterity in sin and misery; and like the adder in the path, or the dragon by the well, lying in wait for the unwary passenger, he still watches with unceasing vigilance and activity, to plunge us deeper in guilt and wretchedness. To this cause, perhaps, may be traced the hatred which animates every human bosom against the whole brood of the serpent; than which nothing is more odious, nothing more carefully shunned.

"Nempe ruri est uxor tua, quam dudum dixeras

'Te odisse æque atque angues.'"

Plaut.

* Is. xliii. 30.

CHAP V.

AMPHIBIOUS ANIMALS.

*Serpents.*

THE greater part of serpents are amphibious, and take to the water readily. Among these may be classed the boa, or proper dragon, who swims without fear the broad and rapid stream, and rides upon the swelling waves. One kind of large serpent, at least, certainly does exist, which has been met with at a considerable distance from land; this appears to be one which can live equally in both elements. With this species, the ancients were not unacquainted. Virgil thus describes the progress of two amphibious serpents from Tenedos to the Trojan shore: With immense orbs they stretched their lengths along the smooth surface of the sea, and with equal motion shot forward to the beach. Their breasts, erect amidst the waters, and their chests bedropped with blood, tower above the deep; their other parts sweep the sea behind, and wind their spacious backs in rolling spires. *Lashed by their strokes*, the floods resound, the briny ocean foams; and now they are got to land, and darting fire from their glaring eyes suffused with blood, with forked tongues licked their hissing mouths.

“Fit sonitus, spumante salo: jamque arva tenebant,

Ardentesque oculos suffecti sanguine, et igni,

Sibila lambebant linguis vibrantibus ora.”

Æn.

The existence of such serpents, is attested by modern writers in the clearest terms. Baldeus informs us, that “serpents are very common all over the isle of Ceylon; the SEA SERPENTS are sometimes eight, nine, or ten yards long.”

“Peter van Coerden, admiral of the Dutch fleet in the

East Indies, says, that while he was at anchor on the coast of *Mozambic*, a boy that was washing himself by the ship's side, was seized by the middle by a serpent of enormous size, that dragged him under water at once, in the sight of the whole fleet."—And "P. van den Broek, that at *Golconda*, there are serpents of prodigious size, the bite of which is instantly mortal; and observes further, that *whenever these creatures are seen at sea*, it is a certain sign of their being near the Indian coast*."

Taylor, however, justly remarks, that serpents have been seen too far out at sea, to be supposed natives of the land; these are true hydras: but their varieties, colours, manners, and other particularities, are not well understood.

"We cannot doubt the existence of sea serpents, at least equal in dimensions with land serpents; (see *Literary Panorama*, vol. 5. p. 749, for one fifty-five feet long,) but do these possess venom? However that may be, the histories quoted may justify the sacred writers in speaking of sea serpents, which they call *nahash*; as Amos ix. 3. 'Though they hide in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the serpent,—*nahash*, and he shall bite them'."

The question whether sea serpents possess venom, has been laid to rest by recent intelligence from India. In the year 1807, a stout young man, a fisherman in the vicinity of Calicut, was bit on the point of the middle finger of the right hand, by a sea snake which had been entangled in his net. Conceiving the snake to be perfectly harmless, he threw it into the sea, and thought nothing of the bite. In less than an hour afterwards, he complained of a slight pain in the affected finger, which extended along the inside of the right arm. The pain increased continually; he was affected with giddiness and weakness in his loins and lower extremities, which was followed by violent spasms, and he died in convulsions early in the morning after he had been bitten.

* Taylor's *Calmet*, vol. 4.

Just as the medical man who gave this statement had finished his account, another case of the same kind occurred. The man had been similarly employed, and was bitten on the back of the fore-finger of the right hand, about one hour before he was brought to the surgeon's house. The wound was very distinct, but attended with little pain. He placed a tight ligature upon the arm, scarified freely the wounded part, applying other remedies, as well external as internal. The patient suffered very severe pain in the affected hand, from two o'clock till about six, but was next morning quite well, though weak. The snake was described to be of the same kind with the former, but much smaller.

The Frog.

The aquatic frog was one of the plagues with which Jehovah smote the land of Egypt, because they refused to let his people go. For the name (צפרדעים) Tsephardim, signifies animals which live in marshes or in stagnant waters. The sacred historian also says, they were generated in the rivers and lakes of Egypt: "And the Lord spake unto Moses; say unto Aaron, stretch forth thine hand with thy rod over the streams, over the rivers, and over the ponds (or lakes), and cause frogs to come up upon the land of Egypt: and Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt." After the plague ceased, we are told the frogs remained in the river only. These quotations clearly prove, that only aquatic frogs were commissioned to act against the Egyptians on that occasion.

As the frog was, in Egypt, an emblem of Osiris, or the sun, the first object of idolatrous worship to the nations of the east, it is probable the Egyptians regarded it with superstitious veneration. If this conjecture is well founded, it brings into view the secret reason of the second plague; for it is perfectly consistent with the divine wisdom, to punish a nation by means of that which they foolishly revere.

These vengeful reptiles were produced in the streams of the Nile, and in the lakes which were supplied from his waters, because the river was supposed, by that deluded people, to possess an uncommon degree of sanctity, and to deserve their religious veneration; it was the object of their confidence, it was accounted the grand source of their enjoyments, and was the constant theme of their praise; it was, therefore, just to pollute those waters with an innumerable multitude of impure animals, to which the respect and confidence which were due only to the true God, the father of the rain, had been impiously transferred. Turned at first into blood, as a just punishment of their unfeeling barbarity towards the male children of Israel, they were now "a second time polluted and disgraced, to the utter confusion both of their gods and priests." The celebrated Bochart, embracing the absurd doctrine of equivocal generation, contends, that the frogs were generated of the muddy waters in the river and stagnant pools; and quotes *Ælian* in support of his persuasion, who declares, that he had seen frogs with their head and fore parts completely formed, and in motion, while the other parts *seemed* to be only passing from slimy mud into the state of animal existence. But the words of *Ælian* do not warrant the conclusion which Bochart draws from them; for that ancient historian only says, the frogs appeared to him in the state of transformation; but the argument from appearance to reality, is quite inconclusive. In the beginning of time, the Almighty Creator commanded the waters to produce, without seminal principles, reptiles of every kind, among which the Jewish writers place the frog; but it is clear, from the words of Moses, that in succeeding ages, every creature was ordained to propagate its own species by generation; for, observes the historian, "God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas*." These words are inconsistent with the doctrine of equivocal generation. It is also a mere gratuitous

* Gen. i. 22.

supposition, unauthenticated by the testimony of credible witnesses, and, therefore, entitled to no credit. Nor is it hazardous to the received doctrine, that every creature, since the first formation, propagates its own kind, to admit, that the powers of ordinary generation are insufficient to account for the prodigious numbers of frogs which issued from the rivers and ponds of Egypt, to chastise that stubborn people; for the Almighty may, when he pleases, resume his creating power, but, from a miraculous or extraordinary occurrence, the ordinary laws of nature cannot justly be inferred.

This loathsome plague extended to every place, and to every class of men. The frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt; they entered into their houses, and into their bed-chambers; they crawled upon their persons, upon their beds, and into their kitchen utensils. The whole country, their palaces, their temples, their persons—all was polluted and hateful. Nor was it in their power to wash away the nauseous filth with which they were tainted, for every stream and every lake was full of pollution. To a people who affected the most scrupulous purity in their persons, their habitations, and manner of living, nothing almost can be conceived more insufferable than this plague. The frog is, compared with many other reptiles, a harmless animal; it neither injures by its bite nor by its poison: but it must have excited on that occasion, a disgust which rendered life an insupportable burden. The eye was tormented with beholding the march of their impure legions, and the ear with hearing the harsh tones of their voices: the Egyptians could recline upon no bed where they were not compelled to admit their cold and filthy embrace; they tasted no food which was not infected by their touch; and they smelled no perfume, but the foetid stench of their slime, or the putrid exhalations emitted from their dead carcases.

How much the Egyptians endured from this visitation, is evident from the haste with which Pharoah sent for Moses and Aaron, and begged the assistance of their prayers: “Entreat

the Lord that he may take away the frogs from me and from my people ; and I will let the people go that they may do sacrifice unto the Lord." Reduced to great extremity, and receiving no deliverance from the pretended miracles of his magicians, he had recourse to that God, concerning whom he had so proudly demanded, " Who is Jehovah, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go ? " Subdued, and instructed by adversity, he implores his compassion, and acknowledges the glory of his name ; but, as the event proved, not with a sincere heart : " Then said Moses, Glory over me ; " an obscure phrase, which is explained by the next clause, " when shall I entreat for thee ? " that is, according to some writers, although it belongs not to thee, Pharaoh, to prescribe to me the time of thy deliverance, which entirely depends on the will and pleasure of God alone ; yet I, who am a prophet, and the interpreter of his will, grant thee, in his name, the choosing of the time when this plague shall be removed. But this interpretation is more ingenious than solid. Moses intends rather to suggest an antithesis between the perverse boasting of the haughty monarch, and the pious gloriation of the humbled penitent, who was now reduced to cry for mercy. Thus far, said Moses, thou hast trusted in thine own power ; then fascinated with the deceitful miracle of the magicians, thou hast perversely exalted thyself against the God of heaven ; now rather glory that thou hast in me an intercessor with God, whose prayers for thy deliverance he will not refuse to hear : and in proof that he is the only true God, and that I bear his commission, fix thou the time of deliverance.

" And he said, to-morrow. And he said, be it according to thy word : that thou mayst know, that there is none like unto the Lord our God." To-morrow, said Pharaoh : but why not to-day ? It was to be expected, that the vexed and humbled monarch would ask for instant relief. It is probable, the king had called Moses and Aaron in the evening, and that he durst not ask the promised deliverance on the same day, because he

thought it was not to be obtained without many prayers. Whatever might be the true reason of Pharaoh's procrastination, the renowned Calvin seems to have no ground for his opinion, that his only reason was, after obtaining his desire, to depart as formerly from his engagement to let the people go; and, that Moses content with his promise, retired to intercede with Jehovah in his favour. That great man was persuaded, that the plague was immediately removed, not suffered to continue till next day. It is better, however, to abide by the obvious meaning of the clear and precise terms used on that occasion, both by the king and the prophet: "and he said, To-morrow. And he said, Be it according to thy word." Moses and Aaron, it is true, "went out from Pharaoh, and immediately cried unto the Lord, because of the frogs which he had brought against Pharaoh." But, it is not said, the Lord immediately removed the plague; but only, that he "did according to the word of Moses." Now, Moses had promised relief next day, in the clearest terms, and we have every reason to suppose, that his intercession proceeded upon his promise; therefore, when the Lord did according to the word of Moses, he removed the frogs on the next day.

They were not, however, swept away, like the locusts which succeeded them, but destroyed, and left on the face of the ground. They were not annihilated, nor resolved into mud, nor marched back into the river from whence they had come; but left dead upon the ground, to prove the truth of the miracle,—that they had not died by the hands of men, but by the power of God; that the great deliverance was not like the works of the magicians, a lying wonder, but a real interposition of almighty power, and an effect of divine goodness. The Egyptians were, therefore, reduced to the necessity of collecting them into heaps, which had the effect of more rapidly disengaging the putrid effluvia, and thus for a time, increasing the wretchedness of the country. Their destruction was probably followed by a pestilence, which cut off many of the

people, in addition to those that died in consequence of the grievous vexations they endured from their loathsome adversaries; for, in one of the songs of Zion, it is said, "He sent frogs, which destroyed them *," laid waste their lands, and infected themselves with pestilent disorders.

In another Psalm, the sweet singer of Israel brings the frogs which destroyed the Egyptians, from the land; whereas, Moses avers, they were produced by the river: "Their land brought forth frogs in abundance, in the chambers of their kings;" but the difference is only apparent, and may be easily reconciled; for the Psalmist may be understood as referring, not to any kind of land, but to the miry soil on the banks, or the mud in the bottom of the river. But the truth is, he uses a term, which signifies a region or country, comprehending both land and water. His true meaning then is, Their land or country, of which the Nile is a part, brought forth frogs: for the land of Egypt certainly produces whatever the Nile contains. Were it necessary to prove so clear a position, the words of Moses might be quoted, in which he reminds the people of Israel, that they came in the course of their journeyings to Jotbath, a land of rivers†; and the sublime ascription of Habakkuk: "Thou didst cleave the earth with rivers‡." The sea itself, belongs as it were to the neighbouring countries; for it is said, that Solomon constructed a fleet "in the land of Edom§;" that is, in the sea which washed the shores of Edom.

It has been inquired, why David in the same passage says, the frogs penetrated into the chambers of their kings. The answer is easy; the plural is often used for the singular in Hebrew: thus the Psalmist himself: "We will go into his tabernacles||;" although there was but one tabernacle where the people of Israel assembled for religious worship. The servants of Nebuchadnezzar accused the three children in these terms: "they do not worship thy gods," meaning only the golden

* Ps. lxxviii. 45.

† Deut. x. 7.

‡ Hab. iii. 9.

§ 1 Kings ix. 26.

|| Ps. cxxxii. 7.

image, which the king had set up in the plain of Dura. The language of David, therefore, in the text under consideration, meant no more than the king's palace. Some interpreters propose another solution: That the kingdom of Egypt was at that time divided into a number of small independent states, governed each by its own prince, and that all of them were equally subjected to the plague; but although it must be granted that this country was in succeeding ages, divided into a number of small principalities, no evidence has been adduced in support of such a state of things in the time of Moses; on the contrary, the whole tenor of his narrative leads to the opposite conclusion. Nor is it unreasonable to suppose, that the principal grandees of Egypt, many of whom were persons of great power and influence in the state, received from the royal Psalmist the title of kings: it is certainly not more incongruous, than to give the title of princes to the merchants of Tyre*; or the title of kings to the princes of Assyria†. The meaning of the passage then, is briefly this; the potent monarch of Egypt, in the midst of his vassal princes, in the innermost recesses of his palace, could find no means of defence against the ceaseless intrusion of the impure vermin which covered the face of his dominions, and equally intested the palaces of the rich, and the cottages of the poor; the awful abode of the king, and the clay-built hovel of the mendicant.

The frog was chosen by the Spirit of inspiration to represent in vision, the false teachers, and other agents of Antichrist; "I saw," said John, "three unclean spirits, like frogs, come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles‡." These impure and mischievous emissaries are generated, and reared in the puddle of moral depravity; like the frog, they disturb the peace, and impair the happiness of all around them.

"——— mali culices, ranæque palustres

Avertunt somnos."

Hor.

* Is. xxiii. 8.

† Ch. x. 8.

‡ Rev. xvi. 13, 14.

Their unceasing loquacity is not less annoying than the perpetual croaking of the impure animal to which they are compared. Their complaints and reproaches; their accusations and curses; their pride and vanity; and their constant and eager exertions to stir up the subjects, kings, and princes of the earth, to mutual slaughter, under the pretence of maintaining the cause of religion,—are still more painful and mischievous, than the obstreperous clamours, the mournful complaints and mutual reproaches, the shameless impudence and the vain-glorious inflations, which the frogs are accused of indulging in their native marshes.

“ ——— nunc quoque turpes

Litibus exercent linguas, pulso que pudore,

Quamvis sint sub aqua, sub aqua maledicere tentant.

Vox quoque jam rauca est, inflata que colla tumescunt,

Ipsa que dilatant patulos convitia rictus.” *Ovid.*

The Behemoth.

Behemoth is an amphibious animal, whose real character is involved in much obscurity. The greater part of modern writers have thought that behemoth is the elephant, and leviathan the whale; this indisputably the largest of the aquatic, and that the largest of terrestrial animals. But their sentiments are liable to objections so numerous and weighty, that we are compelled, after the most careful investigation, to refer these names to very different animals. Bochart is of opinion, that the sacred writers refer, under these terms, to the crocodile and the hippopotamos; and he is probably correct. He follows Beza and Diodati in supposing the leviathan to be the crocodile of the Nile; and from this he infers, that the behemoth is the hippopotamos, an inhabitant of the same river. In the book of Job, the Almighty, after describing a number of terrestrial animals in a continued series, commences a new description in the fortieth chapter, in which we find leviathan, which is allowed by all to be an aquatic animal, joined with behemoth; therefore, to preserve the appointed order undisturbed, the latter must also be an aquatic animal.

They are, besides, very similar in several respects: both are quadrupeds of enormous size—fierce in their dispositions—amphibious in their nature—both of them, inhabitants of the Nile. Nor does the name behemoth ill agree with the hippopotamos; for the Hebrew term behema, may denote any beast, especially if it be of a superior size, as the hippopotamos is acknowledged to be. Aristotle gives him the size of an ass; Herodotus affirms that in stature he is equal to the largest ox; Diodorus makes his height not less than five cubits, or above seven feet and a half; Tatius calls him, on account of his prodigious strength, the Egyptian elephant. The Arabian authors quoted by Bochart, say, that the bahema, the same as the behemoth, is a four-footed animal, although he lives in the water. But were it admitted that behema by itself, is always applied to land animals; yet, behemoth may signify the hippopotamos with sufficient propriety, because that animal yields to very few in bulk and stature; it is amphibious, and resembles, in many particulars, terrestrial animals. No aquatic animal, indeed, so much resembles the beasts of the field; hence the hippopotamos alone of all aquatic animals, is called by way of excellence, behema, or, in the Egyptian dialect, behemoth; for behemoth is not a plural, but a singular noun, with an Egyptian termination, like Thoth, Paoth, Phamenoth, the names of Egyptian months, which are all in the singular number.

The description of behemoth is introduced with these words: “Behold now behemoth which I made with thee, he eateth grass as an ox*.” The Almighty did not need to fetch the arguments of his mighty power from a distance; the Nile, which rolled its ample waters through regions bordering on Arabia, the native country of Job, contained the hippopotamos, one of the most surprising effects of creating power and goodness. Such seems to be the meaning of the command, “Behold now behemoth which I have made with thee,” or in thy

* Job xl. 15.

neighbourhood. The particle *im* often signifies, near or hard by: thus, in the book of Joshua, the city of Ai is said to be *im* Bethaven, near Bethaven*; and, in the book of Judges, the Danites were, *im* beth Micah, near the house of Micah. But, as the propriety of the translation cannot be disputed, it is needless to multiply examples. The Almighty proceeds: "he eateth grass like an ox." The ox and the elephant are equally beasts of burden; it is therefore by no means wonderful that they live on the same kind of food;—but that the hippopotamos, an aquatic animal, which lives for the most part in the bottom of the Nile, should eat grass like an ox, is a singular phenomenon, well entitled to our consideration. Nor is it without design he is compared to the ox; for, he not only associates with him in the same pastures, but also bears a considerable resemblance to him in the size and stature of his body, and in the form of his head and feet. "Lo, now," says Jehovah, "his strength is in his loins, and his force in the navel of his belly." The loins are the seat of strength in every animal; hence, in the language of Scripture, to strengthen the loins denotes an augmentation of power. A very decisive instance occurs in the second chapter of Nahum: "Make thy loins strong;" fortify thy power mightily. The same idea is involved in the prayer of the Psalmist, that the power which the wicked had so greatly abused, might be diminished till it became consistent with the peace and safety of others, or entirely taken away: "Make their loins continually to shake†."

The last clause, "His force is in the navel of his belly," cannot well be reconciled with the statements of ancient writers, that the belly of the elephant is the most tender and vulnerable part of his body. This is a fact so generally known, so fully authenticated, that in war the hostile spear is usually directed to the navel of that formidable animal, where the most deadly wound may be inflicted. We learn from Pliny, that when the rhinoceros attacks the elephant, he likewise aims his

* Josh. vii. 2.

† Psalm lxi. 23.

furious thrust at the same part of the body. The same powerful instinct which directs the horn of the rhinoceros, leads the gnat, if the Talmudical writers may be credited, to the navel of the elephant, which it enters, and torments him with excruciating pains. But it is not to be supposed, that the inspired writer would place the strength of that animal in the softest and most defenceless part of his frame, because it is not consistent with the truth of natural history. But the navel and belly of the hippopotamos are like the rest of his body, protected by an impenetrable skin of so great solidity and thickness, that it is said to be formed into spears, and other missile weapons. Diodorus asserts, that the hippopotamos has a skin nearly the strongest of all animals, *παντων των θηριων σχεδον ισχυροτατον*; and Ptolomy says hyperbolically, that the robbers in India have a skin like the hippopotamos, which no arrow can pierce. Zeringhi declares, that a musket ball can make no impression on the dried skin of that animal, nor can any weapon pierce it, till it has been long steeped in water.

Behemoth "moveth his tail like a cedar." Many writers, among whom are Caryl and Schultens, in order to support their hypothesis that behemoth is the elephant, venture to contradict the uniform sense of the term *zanab*, which in our translation is properly rendered the tail, and make it signify the proboscis or trunk of that animal. *Zanab*, in Parkhurst, signifies the extremity or hindmost part of a thing, as the tail of an animal*, or the end of a fire-brand almost extinguished†; and hence, as a verb in a primitive sense, to cut off the extremity or hindmost part. Yet in opposition to the constant meaning of this word in Scripture, these writers turn it into the snout or trunk of the elephant, to make it agree with their favourite hypothesis. But if *zanab* be suffered to retain its usual meaning, it furnishes a strong presumption, that the hippopotamos is intended in the text under consideration, and not the elephant, whose tail, like that of the hog, is small, weak,

* See Exod. iv. 4. and Jud. xv. 4.

† Isa. vii. 4.

and inconsiderable. It is, according to Buffon, but two feet and a half or three feet long, and pretty slender; but the tail of the hippopotamos, he observes from Zerenghi, does not resemble that of a hog, but rather that of a tortoise, only that it is incomparably thicker. The tail of the hippopotamos, Sheuchzer observes, although short, is thick, and may be compared to the cedar for its tapering, conical shape, its smoothness, thickness, and strength. But although it is thick, short, and very firm, yet he moves and twists it at pleasure; which, in the sacred text, is considered as a proof of his prodigious strength.

“The sinews of his stones,” continues the sacred writer, “are wrapped together.” Bochart renders the words, the sinews of his thighs are interwoven or twisted together. From this short, but emphatical clause, we may certainly infer, that behemoth is one of the most powerful animals on the face of our globe. Such undoubtedly is the hippopotamos, if we may credit the accounts of Dampier, who declares he has known him set one tooth in the gunnel of a boat, and another at the distance of more than four feet, and there bite a hole through the plank, and sink the boat; and when he had done, he went away shaking his ears. On another occasion, he saw him in the wash of the shore, when the sea tossed in a boat with fourteen hogsheads of water in her, and left it dry upon his back; and another surge came and fetched the boat off, without the beast receiving any perceptible injury. Dampier and his crew made several shots at him, but to no purpose, for the bullets glanced from his sides as from a wall of adamant.

The idea of his prodigious strength is increased by the account given of his bones, which are compared to strong pieces of brass, and bars of iron*. Such figures are commonly employed by the sacred writers, to express great hardness and strength, of which a striking example occurs in the prophecies of Micah: “Arise and thresh, O daughter

* Job xl. 18.

of Zion; for I will make thy horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass; and thou shalt beat in pieces many people*." So hard and strong are the bones of the hippopotamos. The cutting, and particularly the canine teeth of the lower jaw, says Buffon, are very long, and so hard and strong, that they strike fire with steel; a circumstance which probably gave rise to the fable of the ancients, that the hippopotamos vomited fire. The substance of the canine teeth is so white, so fine, and so hard, that it is preferable to ivory for making artificial teeth. "His bones are like bars of iron;" and such, in the description of Buffon, are the bones of this animal. The cutting teeth, says that celebrated naturalist, especially those of the under jaw, are very long, cylindrical, and chamfered. The canine teeth are also long, crooked, prismatic, and sharp like the tusks of the wild boar. The largest of the cutting and canine teeth, are twelve, and sometimes sixteen inches long, and each of them weighs from twelve to thirteen pounds.

It is added, "he is the chief of the ways of God: he that made him, can make his sword to approach unto him†." The phrase in the first clause, is evidently hyperbolical, and signifies merely, that he is one of the noblest animals, which the almighty Creator produced. In size, the hippopotamos is inferior only to the elephant. The male, which Zeringhi brought from the Nile to Italy, was sixteen feet nine inches long, from the extremity of the muzzle to the origin of the tail; fifteen feet in circumference, and six feet and a half high; and the legs were about two feet ten inches long. The head was three feet and a half in length, and eight feet and a half in circumference. The opening of the mouth was two feet four inches, and the largest teeth were more than a foot long. Thus, his prodigious strength, his impenetrable skin; the vast opening of his mouth, and his portentous voracity; the whiteness and hardness of his teeth; his manner of life, spent with equal ease in the sea, on the land, or at the bottom of the Nile,—equally claim our admiration, and

* Micah iv, 13.

† Job xl. 19.

entitle him to be considered as the chief of the ways of God. Nor is he less remarkable for his sagacity; of which, two instances are recorded by Pliny and Solinus. After he has gorged himself with corn, and begins to return with a distended belly to the deep, with averted steps he traces a great many paths, lest his pursuers following the lines of one plain tract, should overtake and destroy him while he is unable to resist. The second instance is not less remarkable: When he has become fat with too much indulgence, he reduces his obesity by copious bleedings. For this purpose, he searches for newly cut reeds, or sharp pointed rocks, and rubs himself against them, till he make a sufficient aperture for the blood to flow. To promote the discharge, it is said, he agitates his body; and when he thinks he has lost a sufficient quantity, he closes the wound by rolling himself in the mud. Hence, Pliny calls him the discoverer of the art of blood letting; and the master of the healing art.

“He that made him, can make his sword approach unto him:” or, as the words may be rendered, He who made him, has applied to him his sharp crooked sword; of which the meaning seems to be, He has furnished his mouth with long teeth, somewhat bent, sharp and protruded, with which, as with a crooked sword or sickle, he reaps and masticates the grass and corn on which he feeds. But if behemoth be understood of the elephant, how can it be said with any correctness, that he is provided with a crooked sword for reaping his food. The shortness of his neck prevents him from reaching the ground with his mouth, and using his teeth for collecting food. This operation is performed by his trunk, which receives the food, and conveys it into his mouth. His teeth are perfectly inefficient, except for mastication; and as for his trunk, it has no resemblance to any sharp instrument; on this account, the ancients never gave it the name of a sword or sickle, but called it a hand; a name which it may receive with great propriety.

A very learned interpreter, perceiving the inconvenience of this exposition, if behemoth mean the elephant, prefers our translation: "He that made him, can make his sword approach unto him:" that is, He alone that made him, can take away his life. But whether we apply the words to the elephant, or the hippopotamos, the sense is equally inadmissible, for both these animals are frequently destroyed without the immediate interference of God. Besides, to apply the sword to any one, and to take away his life with it, are not exactly the same; nor does this view agree with the whole series of the context, while the interpretation given by Bochart perfectly accords with it, and connects the verse with the subsequent part of the narrative: He who made him, has furnished him with a sickle or crooked sword, to reap and collect his food.

The reason of his being provided with such an instrument, is assigned in the next verse: "Surely the mountains bring him forth food, where all the beasts of the field play." This is considered as a very strong argument in favour of the elephant, an animal which, it is well known, browses upon the mountains; while, fully assured of his mild and forbearing temper, all the beasts of the field sport around him in peace and security. But the text applies with equal, and even with more propriety to the hippopotamos; for it seems to indicate something remarkable in the circumstance, that such an animal should seek his food in peace, on the hills and mountains which skirt his habitation. But surely it is not strange, that the elephant, a creature which always lives on the land, and whose disposition leads him to eat grass like an ox, should be found on such a pasture. The hippopotamos, on the contrary, lives for the most part in the water, and walks on the bottom as in the open air; yet, he seeks his food more frequently on the land, where he devours sugar canes, rushes, millet, rice, roots, and vegetables of every kind, in immense quantities, and ravages, far and wide, the cultivated fields. Not content with laying waste the plains, he proceeds in the night to the hills

and mountains, and renews his depredations *. Natural historians give the same account of the morse, an animal, which in many respects, resembles the hippopotamos, and inhabits the large rivers of Russia, which roll their waters into the frozen ocean. He is about the size of an ox, with very short legs; his breast is higher and broader than the other parts of the body; he has two large and long tusks, resembling ivory in whiteness, and of equal value. When he is inclined to sleep, he forsakes the ocean, and, in companies, retires to the mountains.

Around the hippopotamos, the beasts of the field may sport in safety; for, although he feeds on fishes, crocodiles, and even cadaverous flesh, he is not known to prey on other animals. It is not even difficult to drive him away from the cultivated fields, for he is more timid on land than in the water. His only resource in danger, is to plunge into the deep, and travel under it a great way, before he ventures again to appear. The Indians, according to Dampier, are accustomed to throw him a part of their fish when he comes near their canoes, and then he passes on without doing them any harm. The same voyager relates an anecdote, which remarkably displays the mildness of his disposition; as their boat lay near the shore, he went under her, and with his back, lifted her out of the water, and upset her with six men on board, but did them no personal injury. These facts prove, at once, his incredible strength and his habitual gentleness.

When sated with food, he reposes "under the shady trees in the covert of the reed and fens." The elephant, it is admitted, delights in the shade, but very seldom lies down to sleep, as the sacred writer asserts of behemoth; nor is he known to frequent the reeds which cover the marsh, and skirt the border of the lake. But the reeds are the chosen haunt of the hippopotamos; they supply him with a grateful food, and screen him during his repose from the burning heat

* Diodor. Sic.

of the sun. In this part of his history, ancient and modern authors harmoniously accord. Marcellinus observes, that he reposes among the tall reeds, where they grow thickest in the mire. They are his covert, his food, and his medicine. Hence the prayer of David, Rebuke the company of the spearmen, or, as it may be translated, the wild beast of the reed, has been supposed to refer to the hippopotamos, as the symbol of the Egyptian people and government; which is the more probable, as he mentions the bulls and the calves, which that degenerate race honoured with idolatrous reverence. The circumstance of his making his bed among the thick reeds of the marsh, naturally suggests his relation to the Nile, whose banks are richly clothed with that plant; and this is confirmed by many Egyptian representations, in which he is joined with the crocodile. Kimchi, and other writers who contend that the elephant is meant in this description, unable to reconcile the clause under consideration to their theory, are compelled to throw it into the form of an interrogation: Does he lie under the shady trees in the covert of the reeds and fens? that is, he by no means lies in such places. But they did not perceive, that this solution of the difficulty is destructive to their own theory; for the elephant does lie under the shady trees, or takes his repose standing under their covert. Besides, to throw the clause into the form of an interrogation, is to break the texture of the description, and to mar its beauty; and, if such liberties with the sacred text were admitted, nothing is so plain or express in the word of God, which may not be eluded.

The only other remark necessary to be made, is, that the words of the sacred writer are confirmed by the testimony of Buffon, who says, the hippopotamos, besides his usual cry, which has a great resemblance to that of the elephant, or to the stammering and indistinct sounds uttered by deaf persons when asleep, makes a kind of snorting noise, which betrays him at a distance. To prevent the danger arising from this

circumstance, he generally lies among the reeds that grow upon marshy grounds, and which it is difficult to approach: there “the shady trees cover him with their shadow; the willows of the brook compass him about.” The learned Bochart translates the Hebrew word Nahal, the Nile, because its ancient pronunciation is Neël, which, by a very small variation, is changed into the modern name of that far-famed river. He therefore renders the text, The willows of the Nile compass him about. That the word Nahal has this signification, he endeavours to prove from many passages of Scripture, where we find the phrase, *the river of Egypt*. Thus, in describing the bounds of Canaan, Moses says, “The border shall fetch a compass from Azmon unto the river of Egypt*.” He appeals also in support of his opinion, to several ancient Latin poets, who give the Nile the name of a torrent. Thus, Lucan, b. 9.—“Atque alii reges Nilo torrente nutabunt.” And Valerius—“Contra Nilus et toto gurgite torrens.”

These writers call it a torrent, because it is liable to periodical inundations, or to rise and fall like the streams which are formed by summer showers. For this reason, Strabo conjectures the Nile was said to come down from Jove. But although the reasoning and authorities of our learned author are entitled to great respect, his argument on this point is exposed to several objections of considerable weight. In the first place, the river of Egypt cannot mean the Nile; for we know that the people of Israel never occupied the countries that border on that river, after they went up from the land of Egypt; while we learn from the same infallible authority, that they gradually subdued the nations whose lands they had received as their inheritance, till they had obtained the quiet possession of the whole country. The river of Egypt, therefore, was not the Nile, but a stream which flowed not far from Gaza, and marked the southern boundary of Canaan.

In the second place, admitting that the word Nile is derived

* Num. xxxiv. 5.

from Nahal, yet in not one of the Scriptures quoted by our learned author, is the latter term used alone, as in the instance before us; the word Egypt is added in them all: therefore, although it were proved that the river of Egypt is the Nile, it would not prove that the single word Nahal denotes that river. In this construction, Nahal signifies any torrent in any part of the world.

In the third place, in one passage of Scripture where the phrase, the willows of the brook, is found, the Nile cannot be intended, but some other torrent. The children of Israel, at the celebration of the feast of tabernacles, were commanded to cut down the boughs of thick trees, and the willows of the brook*. These could not be the willows that grew on the banks of the Nile; for, when this command was given, they had left Egypt never to return: it was besides, a law which they were to observe in the land of Canaan. A similar phrase, with a slight inversion, occurs in the prophecies of Isaiah: "Therefore the abundance they have gotten, and that which they have laid up, shall they carry away to the brook of the willows†." Here the phrase must relate, not to the Nile, but to the Euphrates; and in this sense it has been taken by perhaps every interpreter of the Holy Scriptures. Hence, the reasoning of Bochart in this instance is inconclusive; while his interpretation of behemoth is unquestionably correct.

Behemoth, which before was feeding upon the mountains, or sleeping under the shade of the reeds and the willows, is in the next verse introduced quenching his thirst at the river: "Behold, he drinketh up a river, and hasteth not; he trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth." Bochart gives a different translation: "Behold, let a river come upon him, he will not fear; he is safe though Jordan break forth upon his mouth." This version, it must be allowed, agrees perfectly with what natural historians say of the hippopotamos, that he walks deliberately into the deepest floods, and pursues his journey with

* Lev. xxiii. 40.

† Isa. xv. 7.

the same fearless composure as in the open air, along the bottom of the torrent, or the channel of the sea. He remains a long time under water. Dampier has seen him descend to the bottom of three fathoms water, and remain there more than half an hour, before he returned to the surface.

The inspired writer thus concludes his description : “ he taketh it with his eyes ; his nose pierceth through snares.” Bochart renders the words, Who shall take him in his sight, and perforate his nose with hooks ? that is, Who shall come before him, and attack him with open violence ? It is found extremely difficult to subdue him in fair combat ; and therefore the Egyptians have recourse to stratagem. They watch near the banks of the Nile, till he leave the river to feed in the adjacent fields : they then make a large ditch in the way by which he passed, and cover it with thin planks, earth, and herbage. Passing without suspicion on his return to the flood, over the deceitful covering, he falls into the ditch, and is immediately dispatched by the hunters, who rush from their ambush, and pour their shot into his head. From this review, the fair and necessary conclusion seems to be, that behemoth is not the elephant, but the hippopotamos of the Nile.

Leviathan.

The term leviathan is properly the same as thannin, which in our Scriptures is translated dragon. The royal Psalmist uses them as convertible terms, in the seventy-fourth Psalm, where he celebrates the mighty power of God in these lofty strains : “ Thou brakest the heads of the dragons (thannin) in the waters ; thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces, and gavest him to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness*.” He has been followed by the prophet in a passage where he foretels the deliverance of the church, from her cruel and implacable enemies : “ In that day, the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword, shall punish leviathan, the piercing serpent, even leviathan, that crooked serpent ; and

* Ps. lxxiv. 13, 14.

he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea *.” Kimchi distinguishes leviathan and thannin by their magnitude alone: Leviathan, says he, is that enormous serpent or dragon. Hence, leviathan is a sinuous animal, which coils itself up like a dragon; and is described by the prophet, as the oblique, tortuous, or crooked serpent. But, as the word thannin is often used to denote the whale, and other marine animals; so, the term leviathan is in Scripture sometimes employed to denote the same creatures. An example of this use of the term occurs in David’s description of the sea: “There go the ships, there is that leviathan whom thou hast made to play thereon.” It is not however certain, that the term is ever used in this general sense: for it will be shewn, that the creature to which it properly belongs, often infests the sea near the mouth of the great rivers of Africa and the east. Every part of the sublime description, which Jehovah has given of leviathan in the book of Job, exactly corresponds with the natural history of the crocodile, which lives equally in the sea and in the river. That terrible animal bears a striking resemblance to the dragon or serpent. He has the shape of our asp; and his feet are so short, that, like the serpent, he seems to go upon his belly. Let us now hear Jehovah himself describe the leviathan, and we shall find that it exactly corresponds with the character and habits of the crocodile: “Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook; or his tongue with a cord which thou lettest down?” He is of too great magnitude to be drawn out of the water like a fish. The second clause manifestly refers to the impossibility of drawing out his tongue, on account of its adhering throughout to his under jaw. It is besides short, thin, and broad, and by consequence, cannot be drawn out to his lips, like the tongue of any other animal.

“Canst thou put a hook into his nose? or bore his jaw through with a thorn? or wilt thou put a head stall of bulrushes upon his head, and pierce his jaw with a hook?” He is too

* Isa. xxvii. 1.

powerful and fierce to be treated like a small fish : the elephant may submit to such indignities, but the crocodile scorns the dominion of man.

“ Will he make many supplications unto thee? Will he speak soft words unto thee?” An elegant *prosopopæia*, which expresses, with great force and beauty, the difficulty with which he is overcome.

“ Will he make a covenant with thee? Wilt thou take him for a servant for ever?” as the vanquished are wont to redeem their life with the loss of their liberty. This question seems to intimate, that attempts have been made to tame the crocodile, but they have uniformly proved abortive. If this allusion is involved in the words, it is a certain proof that the whale is not intended; for, while attempts have actually been made to tame the crocodile, none have ever been made to domesticate the whale.

“ Wilt thou play with him as with a bird? or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens?” It cannot be: he is a truculent animal, and particularly hostile to children of both sexes; that, by approaching the banks of the Nile without sufficient circumspection, fall a prey to this vigilant devourer. He will even rush upon a full grown person, and drag him in a moment to the bottom of the stream. Maximus Tyrius mentions an Egyptian woman, who brought up a young crocodile of the same age with her son, and permitted them to live together in the most familiar manner. The crocodile was gentle and harmless during his early youth, but his natural disposition gradually unfolded as he advanced to maturity, till at last he seized upon his unsuspecting associate, and devoured him. Ancient authors record many instances of crocodiles entering the houses of the inhabitants near the Nile, and destroying their children. These are sufficient to justify the interrogation of the Almighty, and to shew, that the terrible animal in question never can be completely tamed, nor safely trusted.

“ Shall thy companions make a banquet of him? Shall they

part him among the merchants?" If leviathan be the whale, both the one and the other are done every year; in some parts of the world, every day. The inhabitants of some regions, feast upon the blubber of the whale, and lay up the remainder for winter provisions. Cetaceous fishes, are sought by "the merchants" at great expence, and constitute no inconsiderable portion of their wealth. But the fishermen neither rejoice when the crocodile is taken, except for the death of a devouring monster, nor feast upon his flesh; they do not cut up his carcase, nor expose him to sale, with the view of increasing their riches.

"Canst thou fill his skin with barbed irons, or his head with fish spears?" If leviathan, in this sublime expostulation, signified the whale, the answer might be given in the affirmative; for that prodigious creature has been often compelled to yield to the harpoon; his skin has been filled with barbed irons, and his head with fish spears: nor is the capture of the whale attended with much difficulty. But the crocodile is said to defy the arm of the harpooner, and the point of his spear; and in attacking him, the assailant has to encounter both difficulty and danger.

"Lay thy hand upon him, remember the battle, do no more." So great a horror shall seize thee, that thou shalt think rather of flight than combat, and the very touch of his skin shall convince thee, that it will not yield to thy stroke.

"Behold, the hope of him is in vain; shall not one be cast down, even at the sight of him?" If leviathan cannot be taken by these means, the hope of subduing him is utterly vain; none may expect to prevail against him; his very presence fills the stoutest heart with terror. It cannot however be denied, that the crocodile is often taken and destroyed; but the remark equally applies to the whale; and consequently, if the words of Jehovah describe a creature which is too powerful and too fierce to be vanquished, neither the one nor the other can be understood. But it were absurd to suppose, that

any creature on the earth, or in the sea, is either invulnerable or unconquerable. The sacred writer says expressly, that every creature may be tamed by the industry of man. The language of Jehovah, therefore, only means, that the man who attacks the leviathan, must not hope for an easy conquest; and the experience of all ages, attests the truth of the assertion. In size, he is very inferior to the whale; yet, he sometimes extends to the length of thirty feet; and if some ancient writers of considerable name, are to be believed, to forty or fifty. His strength is so great, that with one stroke of his tail, he is said to cast the strongest animals to the ground; so that, to hunt the crocodile, has always been reckoned one of the boldest and most perilous undertakings. In the time of Diodorus, the Nile and his adjacent lakes, swarmed with crocodiles; yet, very few were taken, and those not with hooks, but with iron nets. How difficult an undertaking this was, may be inferred from the coin which Augustus, the Roman emperor, caused to be struck, when he had completed the reduction of Egypt, on which, was exhibited the figure of a crocodile, bound with a chain to a palm-tree, with this remarkable inscription, *Nemo antea relegavit*. These words certainly insinuate, that in the experience of the ancients, to chain the crocodile, was an achievement of the utmost difficulty. If the crocodiles which inhabit the Nile, are not, as some modern travellers maintain, so fierce and dangerous as the ancients represent them, it must be owing to a number of adventitious circumstances; for in other parts of the world, they are as ferocious as ever. It ought to be remembered, that Jehovah describes the general character of the species, which are admitted by writers of undoubted credit, to be the most fierce and savage of all animals. Plutarch asserts in express terms, that no creature is so ferocious; and in another part of his works, that it is an animal extremely averse to society, and the most atrocious of all the monsters which the rivers, the lakes, or the seas produce.

But the identity of leviathan and the crocodile, will appear

still more clearly from a review of the subsequent verses, in which Jehovah enters into a more particular specification. "None is so fierce that dare stir him up; who then is able to stand before me?" When the crocodile is satiated with prey, he leaves the deeps to repose on the banks of the river, or on the shore of the sea. At such a time, none are so bold as to disturb his slumbers, or provoke his vengeance; or, if any one, disregarding the dictates of prudence, or eager to display his intrepidity, ventures in such circumstances to attack him, it is at the imminent hazard of his life, and is for the most part attended with fatal consequences. "Who then," saith Jehovah, "is able to stand before me? Who hath prevented me, that I shall repay him? Whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine?" These clauses, although teeming with important instruction, and considering the authority with which they are clothed, entitled to deep attention, contribute nothing to the object of this review; we therefore proceed to the twelfth verse. "I will not conceal his parts, nor his power, nor his comely proportion." These are admirably displayed in the following particulars: Who can discover the face of his garment, or come to him with a double bridle? The crocodile never casts his skin, like the greater part of serpents, which he so nearly resembles, but retains it to the end of his life. The horse is a most powerful and spirited animal, yet, he suffers a bit to be put into his mouth, and submits to the control of man; but the crocodile spurns his dominion, and parts with his freedom only with his life. Some interpreters propose a different version, which is equally characteristic of the crocodile: Who shall venture within the reach of his jaws, which, when extended, have the appearance of a double bridle?

"Who can open the doors of his face? his teeth are terrible round about." The doors of his face are his immense jaws, which he opens with a great and horrible hiatus. This feature of the crocodile has been mentioned by all naturalists. Peter Martyr saw one, whose mouth was seven feet in width.

Tatius asserts, that in seizing the prey, he becomes all mouth : and Albert, that the opening of his mouth extends as far back as his ears. Leo Africanus and Scaliger affirm, that he can receive within his mouth, a young heifer. The vast capacity of his jaws, is attested also by Martial in the following lines :

“ Cum comparata rictibus tuis ora
Nileacus habeas crocodilus angusta.”

“ His teeth are terrible round about :” or, in every respect, calculated to inspire the beholder with terror. They are sixty in number, and larger than the proportion of his body seems to require. Some of them project from his mouth like the tusks of a boar ; others are serrated and connected like the teeth of a comb ; hence, the bite is very retentive, and not less difficult to cure than the wound inflicted by the teeth of a mad dog. All the ancients agree, that his bite is most tenacious and horrible.

“ His scales are his pride, shut up together as with a close seal. One is so near to another, that no air can come between them ; they are joined one to another ; they stick together that they cannot be sundered.” In these remarkable words, is described the closeness of his scales, which, cohering to one another like the plates of a shield, cover his whole back. Those writers who make leviathan signify the whale, find themselves involved by this part of the description in an inextricable difficulty, for the whale has not a scale upon its body. This single circumstance indeed, ought to determine the question : the whale it cannot be, for that immense animal has a smooth skin ; and the history of Nature furnishes no other to which the description of Jehovah will apply, but the crocodile. One writer endeavours to get quit of the difficulty, by supposing that the text includes a comparison, and paraphrases it in this manner : leviathan is as safe from the assault of men, as if his body were defended with the strongest and broadest scales. But this mode of interpretation cannot be too severely reprobated ; because, it makes the sacred text say any thing which

may suit the taste or the purpose of a writer. The words of Jehovah are express; the back of leviathan is covered with numerous, strong, and closely connected scales, under the protection of which, he fears no assailant, he shrinks from no danger. Nor is it consistent with truth, that a whale which has no scales, is as strongly defended against the point of a spear, as if he were covered with this natural shield; for if his prodigious frame were defended by the broadest, the strongest, and the closest scales, the capture, if at all practicable, would be as arduous and difficult, as it is now easy. Abandoning this feeble and inadmissible argument, Caryl and others contend, that some cetaceous fishes are covered with scales, quoting in support of their assertion, a passage from Arrian, that he had heard Nearchus say, that the latter had heard certain mariners say, that they had seen cast up upon the sea shore, a monstrous fish of fifty cubits long, which had scales all over, of a cubit thick. On this ridiculous story, it is needless to make any remark; to state is to refute: or, if refutation be deemed necessary, it is sufficient to say, that although hundreds of cetaceous fishes are caught every year, both in the north and in the south sea, not so much as one has been found sheathed in scales, since the days of Nearchus.

“By his neezings a light doth shine; and his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning.” It seems to be generally admitted, that the crocodile turns his face to the sun when he goes to sleep on the banks of the river; and in this position becomes so heated, that the breath, driven forcibly through his nostrils, issues with so much impetuosity, that it resembles a stream of light. A similar expression is used concerning the war horse, in the thirty-ninth chapter, which may give us a clearer idea of the brightness which issues from the nostrils of this animal: “The glory of his nostrils is terrible.” Provoked by the sound of the trumpet, and the sight of armed men, a white fume streams from his expanded nostrils; which the Spirit of inspiration calls his glory, and common authors compare to

fire. Thus, Silius Italicus, *Frenoque teneri impatiens crebras expirat naribus ignes*; and Claudian, *Ignescunt patulæ nares*. In the same manner are we to understand the words of Jehovah concerning the crocodile. The heat of that scaly monster, basking in the scorching beams of a vertical sun, together with the force with which the breath is emitted from the nostrils, produces the same luminous appearance round his nose, as plays round that of the high mettled charger on the day of battle. The next clause possesses very great poetical beauty: "His eyes are like the eyelids of the morning:" like the brightening dawn of day. The learned Bochart, mentions a curious coincidence between this striking figure, and the sentiments of the Egyptians. Among that people, the eyes of the crocodile is the hieroglyphic for the dawn; because they first arrest the attention, as the terrible animal approaches the surface of the deep; or, because they are dim, and command a very limited field of vision under the water, but recover their brilliancy and acuteness as soon as he returns to the open air. Such is the appearance of the solar orb at his rising; he seems to emerge from the waves of the sea with a dim and faded lustre, but which increases every moment as he advances towards the meridian. But how it can be asserted of the whale, that his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning, it is not easy to conjecture. His eyes, which are not much larger than those of an ox, are buried beneath a ponderous eyelid, and imbedded in fat. Hence, blinder than a mole, he wanders almost at random in the mighty waters, equally unable to avoid being left by the retreating surge upon the strand, or dashed upon the pointed rocks.

"Out of his mouth go burning lamps, and sparks of fire leap out: out of his nostrils goeth smoke, as out of a seething pot or cauldron. His breath kindleth coals, and a flame goeth out of his mouth." Tatius gives a similar account of the hippopotamos: His nostrils are very broad, and emit an ignited smoke as from a furnace of fire. The very same remark is

made by Eustathius: He has a broad nose, expiring an ignited smoke as out of a furnace. These two animals live in the same element, and have the same mode of respiration. The longer they continue under water without breathing, they respire the more quickly when they begin to emerge. As the torrent rushes along with greater impetuosity, when the obstacle which opposed its progress is removed; so their breath long repressed, effervesces and breaks out with so much violence, that they seem to vomit flame from their mouth and nostrils. The whale, it must be admitted, being of much larger size than the crocodile, breathes with a proportionate vehemence; it does not, however, vomit fire, but spouts water to an immense height in the air. The language of the inspired writer is highly figurative and hyperbolical, painting in the most vivid colours, the heat and force with which the breath of the crocodile rushes from his expanded nostrils.

“In his neck remains strength, and sorrow is turned into joy before him.” The whale has no neck, and by consequence, cannot be the leviathan: like other fishes his head is joined to his shoulders; while the crocodile is formed like a serpent, with a neck and shoulders, which enables him to move, to raise, or turn back his head when he seizes his prey. “Sorrow is turned into joy before him;” what afflicts, alarms, or depresses other animals, animates his courage and activity. Or the words may be rendered, Sorrow dances before him; which may denote, that he spreads terror and destruction wherever he comes; for he immediately rushes upon those that happen to meet his eye, and although they may be so fortunate as to escape, still they reckon it an ill omen to have fallen in the way of that fierce and savage destroyer. Thus terror marches before him, as a herald before his sovereign, to proclaim his approach, and prepare his way.

“The flakes of his flesh are joined together; they are firm in themselves, they cannot be moved.” As the scales of leviathan present a coat of mail nearly impenetrable to the at-

tacks of his enemies ; so, his flesh, or as it is rendered by some, the prominent parts of his body, are like molten brass, the particles of which adhere so closely, that they cannot be separated. The very reverse of what Job affirmed of himself, may be asserted of the crocodile ; his strength is the strength of stones, and his flesh is formed of brass ; the very refuse, the vilest parts of his flesh (for so the word signifies*), are firm, and strong, and joined ; or as the Septuagint translates it, glued together, that they cannot be moved. But if the refuse of his flesh be so firm and hard, how great must be the strength which belongs to the nobler parts of his frame ? This question is answered in the next verse : “ His heart is as firm as a stone ; yea, as hard as a piece of the nether milstone.” In all creatures, the heart is extremely firm and compact ; in the leviathan it is firm as a stone ; and to give us the highest idea of its hardness, Jehovah compares it to the nether milstone, which, having the principal part of the work to perform, is required to be peculiarly hard and solid. Some writers imagine, that the Almighty refers not so much to the natural hardness of the heart, as to the cruel temper of the animal, or to his fearless intrepidity ; he feels no pity, he fears no danger, he is insensible to external impressions as the hardest stone.

“ When he raiseth up himself, the mighty are afraid ; by reason of breakings they purify themselves.” They feel a secret horror shoot through the whole soul ; they become as it were incapable of reflection, and know not whither to turn, when they see the monster emerging from the deep, thirsting for blood, and displaying the terrors of his expanding jaws. The stoutest heart is humbled, and, like the mariners in the ship with Jonah, when they despaired of life, they cry every one to his God, and promise to break off their sins by righteousness.

“ The sword of him that layeth at him cannot hold ; the spear, the dart, nor the habergeon. He esteemeth iron as

* Amos viii 8.

straw, and brass as rotten wood. The arrow cannot make him flee: sling stones are turned with him into stubble. Darts are counted as stubble; he laugheth at the shaking of a spear." In this glowing description, it is plainly the design of the Almighty to shew, that the skin of the crocodile is impenetrable to these offensive weapons; or else, that regardless of danger, he scorns the wounds they inflict, and with fearless impetuosity seizes on his prey. This entirely accords with the accounts which natural historians give of that animal. Peter Martyr asserts, that his skin is so hard, it cannot be pierced with arrows; and according to other writers, he can be wounded only in the belly. But it is well known, that the whale is vulnerable in every part, and is commonly struck with the harpoon on the back, where the crocodile is defended by an impenetrable buckler of large, extremely hard, and closely compacted scales. On this armour of proof, the edge of the sword is blunted, and its point is broken; the spear falls harmless to the ground, and the dart rebounds from his impenetrable covering. But the habergeon, the coat of mail which the combatant puts on for his own defence, shall not save him from the devouring jaws of the monster; for he esteemeth iron as straw, and brass as rotten wood, which yield to the slightest touch, and crumble into dust before the smallest force. A shower of arrows makes no impression upon him; and the blow of a stone, slung by the most powerful hand, is no more to him than the stroke of a feather, or bit of stubble. Nor do the more dangerous weapons which the warrior hurls from his military engines, depress his courage, or interrupt his assault; for he laughs at the shaking of a spear, he regards it not, when in token of defiance, it is brandished before him.

What is extremely incommodious, or even painful to other creatures, occasions no uneasiness to him. Criminals were punished among the ancients, by being compelled to lie on sharp stones; but so insensible is he to pain, that he can stretch his enormous bulk upon them without inconvenience:

“ Sharp stones are under him ; he spreadeth sharp pointed things upon the mire.” Such a place of repose is his choice, not his punishment. Or the words may refer to the scales of leviathan, which are hard and sharp as a potsherd ; and to his skin, which resembles a board set with sharp stones, or iron spikes. So rough is the skin of the crocodile, so hard are his scales, and so high and pointed the protuberances which rise on his back, that a more apt similitude could not be chosen than the *tribula*, or sharp threshing instrument with iron teeth, to represent, in the liveliest manner, the appearance of this terrible animal, as he lies reposing in the mud of the Nile.

Having described his general appearance, in which we have discovered almost every circumstance fitted to strike the mind with terror, and the impression which his emerging from the deep, and approaching the land, produce in the mind of a beholder, the inspired writer goes on to state the astonishing effects of his return to the water : “ He makes the deep to boil like a pot ; he makes the sea like a pot of ointment.” The first clause exhibits the natural effect of a large body plunging suddenly into deep water ; the second brings into view another circumstance, which beautifully expresses the violent agitation of the gulf into which the leviathan precipitates himself : “ He maketh the sea boil like a pot of ointment.” The sudden and violent displacing of the waters, makes the sea resemble a large cauldron furiously boiling over a strong fire ; or the ascending water, being mixed with sand and mud from the bottom, excited by the violent agitation, resembles in colour, and in the smoothness of its swell, a pot of ointment ; than which, more striking figures can scarcely be presented to the mind. It is the opinion of many of the ancients, that the crocodile exhales from his body an odour like musk, with which he perfumes the pool where he gambols ; and they assign this as the reason, that the turbulence of the gulf which receives him, is compared to the boiling of a pot of ointment. But admitting what so many writers have asserted, that the crocodile dif-

fuses a fragrant odour around him resembling musk, it can hardly be supposed, that the quantity exhaled, can be so great as to warrant such a comparison. The inspired writer seems to allude, not to the ointment or its fragrance, but to the boiling of the pot in which the spices are decocting, an operation which probably required a very brisk ebullition.

Those who maintain that leviathan is the whale, demand how the crocodile, which inhabits the river, can make the sea boil? But the answer is easy: the word sea, both in Hebrew and English, is often used in a restricted sense, for any large expanse of water. The Jewish and Arabian writers, agreeably to this sense, frequently speak of the Nile, and its adjacent lakes, as a sea, and with great propriety, for the river itself is broad and deep, and at a certain season of the year, it overflows its banks, and covers the whole surface of lower Egypt. The lakes which have been formed by the inundations, are of considerable depth and extent, and swarm with crocodiles; these may be called seas with as much propriety as the sacred writers of the New Testament call the lake of Sodom the Salt sea, and the lake of Tiberias the sea of Galilee. The royal Psalmist, it must be admitted, mentions the sea, in the proper sense of the term, as the haunt of leviathan: "So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable; both small and great beasts. There go the ships: there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein*." But as the sea is in that passage opposed to the earth, it may comprehend the whole body of waters which surround and intersect the dry land, and by consequence, the proper habitation of the crocodile. This solution, however, is by no means necessary to establish the claims of this animal to the Scripture title of leviathan, for it has been fully ascertained, by modern travellers, that he actually frequents the sea, although he generally prefers those rivers which are subject to annual inundations. Crocodiles, or alligators, are very common on the coast

* Ps. civ. 24, 25.

and in the deep rivers of Jamaica, though they prefer the banks of such rivers as, in consequence of frequent or periodical overflowing, are covered with mud, in which they find abundance of testaceous fish, worms, and frogs, for food*. In South America, they chiefly frequent marshy lakes, and drowned savannahs†; but in North America, they infest both the salt parts of the rivers near the sea, the fresh currents above the reach of the tide, and the lakes both of salt and fresh water‡. The slimy banks of these rivers within the range of the tide, are covered by thick forests of the mangrove tree, in the intangled thickets of which, the crocodiles conceal themselves and lie in wait for their prey. According to Pinto, they abound on the coast of New Guinea; and Dampier found several on the shores of Timor, an island in the South Sea. The hippopotamos is a powerful adversary to the crocodile, and so much the more dangerous, that it is able to pursue him to the very bottom of the sea. They are so numerous in the bay of Vincent Pinçon, and the lakes which communicate with it, as to obstruct, by their numbers, the piraguas and canoes which navigate those waters§. When De la Borde was sailing along the eastern shore of South America in a canoe, and wishing to enter a small river, he found its mouth occupied by about a dozen large crocodiles. These testimonies prove, beyond a doubt, that the crocodile frequents the mouths of rivers and the bays of the sea, as well as the fresh water stream and lake; and by consequence, the Psalmist might, in perfect agreement with the habits of that animal, represent him as playing in the great and wide sea, while the ships pursue their way to the desired haven.

“He makes a path to shine after him, one would think the deep to be hoary.” He swims with so much force and violence near the surface of the water, that his path may be easily traced by the deep furrow which he leaves behind him, and the white-

* Buffon, Nat. Hist.

† De la Borde.

‡ Catesby.

§ Buffon.

ning foam he excites. The same appearances attend the motion of the dolphin :

——— “qua cana parumper

Spumant signa fugæ et liquidos perit orbita ponto.” *Statius*. But the long withdrawing furrow, and the hoary foam, are not confined to the sea ; they are likewise to be seen in the river and in the lake ; and by consequence, may characterize, with sufficient propriety, the motion of the crocodile in the Nile and its adjacent lakes.

“Upon earth, there is not his like; he is made without fear.” This clause Bochart renders, ‘There is not his like upon the dust (which is certainly the true meaning of the phrase, *Al apha*) ; because, the crocodile is rather to be classed among reptiles than quadrupeds. His feet are so short, that he rather seems to creep than walk, so that he may, with great propriety, be reckoned among “the creeping things of the earth.” But he differs from reptiles in this, that while they are in danger of being trampled upon, and bruised by the foot of the passerger, he is liable to no such accident.

It cannot be said, in strictness of speech, that he is made without fear, for he is known to fly from the bold and resolute attack of an enemy ; but the expression may be understood hyperbolically, as denoting a very high degree of intrepidity. The words of the inspired writer, however, are capable of another version, which at once removes the difficulty, and corresponds with the real character of the animal : He is so made, that he cannot be bruised ; he cannot be crushed like a serpent, or trampled under the feet of his pursuer.

“He beholds all high things ;” or, as it may be translated, he despiseth all that is high ; “he is a king over all the children of pride.” No creature is so large, so strong, so courageous, if we can believe the oriental writers, but he regards it with indifference or contempt. Men, women, and particularly children, who incautiously approach his haunts, become a prey to his devouring maw. The camel, the horse, the ox, and other

portly quadrupeds which fall in his way, he fiercely attacks, and forthwith devours. He will even venture to attack, and not always without success, the elephant and the tiger, when they come to drink in the stream. His first attempt is to strike them down to the ground, or break their legs with his tail, in which he generally succeeds: he then drags them to the bottom of the river; or if they are animals of a moderate size, he swallows them up entire, without taking the trouble of putting them to death*. From this description it appears, that no animal is more terrible than the crocodile; no creature in form, in temper, in strength, and in habits, so nearly resembles leviathan, as described by Jehovah himself, in the book of Job, and consequently none has equally powerful claims to the name. This conclusion is greatly strengthened by several allusions to the leviathan in other parts of Scripture. In the prophecies of Isaiah, he is called “the piercing serpent” or dragon†; and that the prophet under that symbol refers to the king of Egypt, appears from these words: “And it shall come to pass on that day, that the Lord shall beat off from the channel of the river into the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one.” The prophet Ezekiel gives to Pharaoh, the name of the great dragon, or leviathan: “Speak and say, thus saith the Lord God: Behold I am against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers: which has said, my river is mine own, and I have made it for myself‡.” But it would certainly be very preposterous to give the name of the elephant to the king of Egypt, which is neither a native of that country, nor ever known to visit the banks of the Nile. In allusion to the destruction of Pharaoh, and his army in the Red sea, the Psalmist sings: “Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength; thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the water; thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces, and gavest him to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness§.” But why should Pharaoh and his

* Bochart.

† Is. xxvii. 1.

‡ Ezek. xxix. 3.

§ Ps. lxxiv. 13, 14.

people be compared so frequently, and with so much emphasis, to the great dragon or leviathan, but because some remarkable, some terrible creature infests their valley, to which that name properly applies? But no formidable beast of prey, except the crocodile, distinguishes Egypt from the surrounding regions; and since this creature is universally allowed to be extremely strong, cruel, and destructive, we must conclude it is no other than the leviathan of the inspired writers.

CHAP. VI.

DOMESTIC ANIMALS.

The Camel

THE name by which this interesting animal has been distinguished among the oriental nations, is derived from the Hebrew verb (גמל) gamal, to recompense, because there is none that remembers an injury longer, nor seizes with greater keenness the proper opportunity of revenge. "A camel's anger" is, among the Arabians, a proverb for an irreconcilable enmity. This disposition is the more remarkable, that, unless when provoked by harsh treatment, it is eminently gentle and docile. It is indeed one of the most valuable blessings which the bountiful Creator has bestowed on the oriental nations. It constituted, as we learn from the Scriptures, an important branch of patriarchal wealth. Camels were in ancient times, very numerous in Judea, and over all the east. The patriarch Job had at first three thousand, and after the days of his adversity had passed away, six thousand camels. The Arabians estimated their riches and possessions by the number of their camels:

and speaking of the wealth and splendor of a noble or prince, they observed, he had so many camels, not so many pieces of gold. The Midianites and the Amalekites had camels without number, as the sand upon the sea shore; many of which were adorned with chains of gold, and other rich and splendid ornaments*. So great was the importance attached to the propagation and management of camels, that a particular officer was appointed in the reign of David, to superintend their keepers. Nor is it without a special design, that the inspired writer mentions the descent of the person appointed; he was an Ishmaelite, and therefore supposed to be thoroughly skilled in the treatment of that useful quadruped. Nor was the care bestowed on the rearing of camels, either misplaced or extravagant; no beast of burden is equal to that animal in size, in strength, in agility; and in docility, patience, and temperance, he is surpassed by none. Like the ass, he is pleased with the coarsest food, and a very little even of that satisfies his moderate appetite. The labour and fatigue which he is capable of enduring on the poorest and scantiest means of subsistence, almost exceeds belief. He will travel four or five days without water; whilst half a gallon of beans and barley, or else a few balls made of the flour, will sustain him for a whole day. Before drinking, he disturbs the water with his feet; first of all he thrusts his head a great way above his nostrils into the water, and then, after the manner of pigeons, makes several successive draughts†.

“Nature has furnished the camel with parts and qualities adapted to the office he is employed to discharge. The driest thistle and the barest thorn, is all the food this useful quadruped requires; and even these, to save time, he eats while advancing on his journey, without stopping, or occasioning a moment of delay. As it is his lot to cross immense deserts, where no water is found, and countries not even moistened with the dew of heaven, he is endued with the power, at one watering

* Jud. vii. 12.

† Dr Shaw's Trav.

place, to lay in a store, with which he supplies himself for thirty days to come. To contain this enormous quantity of fluid, Nature has formed large cisterns within him, from which, once filled, he draws at pleasure the quantity he wants, and pours it into his stomach with the same effect as if he then drew it from a spring; and with this he travels patiently and vigorously, all day long; carrying a prodigious load upon him, through countries infected with poisonous winds, and glowing with parching and never-cooling sands*."

In travelling over the deserts of Arabia, the camel will carry a burden of at least seven quintals, or five hundred pound weight; and will journey with this load, sometimes ten, sometimes fifteen hours, at the rate of two miles and a half an hour. These extraordinary qualities have procured for him, the significant character of the ship of the desert; and they furnish sufficient encouragement to the Arabs of all countries, which are not rocky or mountainous, to keep up and multiply the breed.

It is sometimes yoked to the chariot, and forced to contend in the race. The emperor Nero sent to the Circensian games, chariots drawn by four camels; and Heliogabalus is reported to have amused himself in his private circus, with chariots drawn by the same number. To this custom, the prophet alludes in his prediction of the fall of Babylon: "He saw a chariot of asses, and a chariot of camels†."

But they were not always compelled to submit their necks to the yoke, for the mere amusement of their lordly proprietors; in time of war, they groaned under the cumbrous baggage of an oriental army, or mingled in the tumult of battle. Many of the Amalekite warriors, who burnt Ziklag in the time of David, were mounted in this manner; for the sacred historian observes, that of the whole army, not a man escaped the furious onset of that heroic and exasperated leader, "save four hundred young men, which rode upon camels, and fled‡." It

* Bruce, vol. 4, p. 596.

† Isa, xxi. 7.

‡ 1 Sam. xxx. 17.

appears from Diodorus, that the Arabians universally employed them in war, setting two warriors upon each, back to back, of whom one opposed the advancing enemy, the other repelled the charge of the pursuer. All the Arabians in the army of Xerxes, were mounted on camels that equalled in speed the swiftest horses*. The Bactrians also fought on camels; and the Parthians, in their wars with the Romans, annoyed with unceasing showers of arrows, from their horses and camels, the legions of their restless and terrible foe.

Mounted on this mild and persevering animal, the traveller pursues his journey over the sandy deserts of the east, with speed and safety. For his convenience, a sort of round basket is slung on each side with a cover, which holds all his necessities, between which, he is seated on the back of the animal. Sometimes two long chairs, like cradles, are hung on each side with a covering, in which he sits, or, stretched at his ease, resigns himself to sleep, without interrupting his journey. These covered baskets, or chairs, are the camel's furniture, where Rachel put the images which she stole from her father†.

That species of camel called the dromedary, is chiefly remarkable for its prodigious swiftness; the Arabs affirming, that it will run over as much ground in one day, as one of their best horses will perform in eight or ten. If this be true, the prophet had reason to call it the "swift dromedary‡;" and the messengers of Esther acted wisely, in choosing this animal to carry their important dispatches to the distant provinces of that immense empire§. Dr Shaw had frequent opportunities, in his travels, of verifying the wonderful accounts of the Arabs in relation to the swiftness of this creature. The sheik who conducted the party to mount Sinai, rode upon a camel of this kind, and would frequently divert them with a display of its abilities; he would depart from their caravan,

* Herod. b. 7.

† Gen. xxxi. 34.

‡ Jer. ii. 23.

§ Esther viii. 10.

reconnoitre another just in view, and return to them again in less than a quarter of an hour.

The dromedary differs from the common camel, in being of a finer and rounder shape, and in having upon its back a smaller protuberance. This species, (for the former seldom deviating from the beaten road, travels with its head at liberty) is governed by a bridle, which being usually fastened to a ring fixed in its nostrils, may very well illustrate the expression which the sacred writer uses concerning Sennacherib: "I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest*." These words refer at once to the absolute control of heaven, under which he acted, and the swiftness of his retreat.

The camel is not only of great importance in the east, as a beast of burden, but also as a means of subsistence in the inhospitable desert; their flesh and their milk supply the traveller with food, and their hair is woven into stuffs for his clothing. This hair is not shorn from the camel, like wool from sheep, but plucked off about the time it is naturally shed by the animal. The dervises, an austere religious order among the 'Turks, wear garments made of camels' hair, which they tuck up with great leathern girdles, and sometimes feed on locusts. We are indebted to Chardin for these interesting facts, which correspond entirely with the dress and food of John the Baptist, as described by the evangelist. It is necessary, however, to remark, that his raiment was not fabricated of the fine hair of that animal, which Ælian says may be compared to wool for softness; but of the long and shaggy hair which, in the east, is manufactured into a coarse stuff anciently worn by monks and anchorites.

In that sublime prediction, where the prophet foretels the great increase and flourishing state of Messiah's kingdom, by the conversion and accession of the Gentile nations, he compares the happy and glorious concourse to a vast assemblage of

* 2 Kings xix. 28.

camels: "The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah;" and that people, and not irrational animals are intended, is evident from these words: "All they from Sheba shall come; they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall shew forth the praises of the Lord*." In adopting this figure, the prophet might perhaps have his eye on the hieroglyphical writings of the Egyptians, in which the figure of a camel represented a man; and if so, besides its strict conformity to the genius of Hebrew poetry, we can discern a propriety in its introduction into this illustrious prediction. Some interpreters piously refer the prophecy to Christ himself; and imagine it began to receive its accomplishment when the Magi, proceeding from the very places mentioned by the prophet, worshipped the new-born Saviour, "and presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh." But Midian and the other places mentioned by the prophet, lay to the south of Judea; while the evangelist expressly says, the Magi came from the east: this, together with their name, Magi, or wise men, clearly proves that Persia was their native country, and the place of their abode.

The ungovernable inclination of God's ancient people, to imitate the idolatrous practices of surrounding nations, is, with admirable propriety, compared to the furious desire of the dromedary, when hurried away by the impetuous call of nature: "How canst thou say, I am not polluted, I have not gone after Baalim? See thy way in the valley, know what thou hast done: Thou art a swift dromedary traversing her ways."

To this fleet animal, the prophet Isaiah undoubtedly refers in the close of his prophecy, where he cheers his people with the prospect of their future restoration, when the Gentiles shall be converted, and all Israel shall be saved: "They shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord, out of all nations, upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and

* Is. lx. 6.

upon mules, and swift beasts, to my holy mountain." The term כרכורי Circaroth is very ambiguous, and of uncertain signification; our translators have accordingly declined giving it any definite meaning, rendering it "swift beasts." Various and contradictory are the interpretations which expositors, both ancient and modern, have proposed; but the tenor of the prophet's discourse undoubtedly indicates the camel or dromedary; for, when he says, they shall bring your brethren upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, it remains to be added, and upon camels or dromedaries. It is by no means probable, that in such an enumeration, the prophet would pass over so useful and so common an animal. The origin of the word is very obscure; Kimchi derives it from (כרכר) Carcar, which signifies to leap or bound, which is the proper motion of the dromedary. Other derivations are suggested by different writers; but none of these are entitled to any consideration.

To pass a camel through the eye of a needle, was a proverbial expression among the nations of high antiquity, denoting a difficulty which neither the art nor the power of man can surmount. Our Lord condescends to employ it in his discourse to the disciples, to shew how extremely difficult it is for a rich man to forsake all for the cause of God and truth, and obtain the blessings of salvation: "I say unto you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God *." Many expositors, however, are of opinion, that the allusion is not to the animal of that name, but to the cable by which an anchor is made fast to the ship; and for camel, they read camil, from which our word cable is supposed to be descended. It is not perhaps easy to determine, which of these ought to be preferred; and some interpreters of considerable note, have accordingly adopted both views. The more common signification of the term, however, seems rather to countenance the first view. The

* Mat. xix. 24.

Talmudical writers had a similar proverb concerning him who proposed to accomplish an impossibility, which they couched in the following terms: "Thou art perchance from the city of Pomboditha, where they send an elephant through the eye of a needle." Another Hebrew adage, mentioned by the learned Buxtorf, bears a striking resemblance to this: They neither shew one a golden palm, nor an elephant which enters through the eye of a needle. Both these proverbial expressions, were intended to express either a thing extremely difficult, or altogether impracticable to human power; but our Lord, instead of the elephant, took the camel, as being an animal better known to the Jews.

The striking analogy, however, between a cable, and a thread which is wont to be passed through the eye of a needle, would incline us to embrace the second view. By the Hebrew term (גמל) gamel, and the Greek word (καμηλος) kamelos, the Syrians, the Hellenistic Jews, and the Arabians, all understood a ship's cable: and hence, the Assyrians and the Arabians contended that the word must be so interpreted, in the proverb under consideration. The Talmudical writers also, have a similar adage, which is quoted by the learned Buxtorf: The departure of the soul from the body is difficult, as the passing of a cable through a small aperture.

The only other allusion to the camel worthy of notice, occurs in our Lord's cutting reproof to the scribes and Pharisees: "Ye blind guides, which strain out a gnat, and swallow a camel*." In these words, he charges them with being extremely scrupulous about very small matters, while they betrayed a glaring and criminal negligence about things of great importance. But as the Pharisees could not literally swallow down a camel, Cajetan supposes a corruption in the text; and maintains, that our Lord did not mention a camel, but a larger species of fly, which might actually be swallowed in drinking. Without admitting this, he contends the words contain no

* Matth. xxiii. 24.

proper antithesis. But as all the ancient versions of this text harmonize with the Greek, a corruption cannot be admitted. Nor is the objection of any importance; for, does not our Lord say, "Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, and considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" Is it usual then for a beam to be in the eye? Our Lord who knows all things, knew that a camel cannot be swallowed; but on this very account the proverb was proper; because, while the Pharisees were extremely precise in little things, they readily perpetrated crimes, which, like the camel, were of enormous magnitude. The design of our Lord was, not to teach that a camel could be swallowed, but that the minutiae of the law in which they displayed such scrupulous accuracy, as the tithing of mint, anise, and cummin, were as much inferior to the weightier matter of the law, as a gnat is inferior to a camel. Similar to this form of speech is another, to which a reference has already been made: "Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye*." The Divine teacher does not mean that a beam can lie concealed in the eye; his design was, to shew that the vices which those hypocrites censured in others, with so much severity, were, although very reprehensible, as inferior to the crimes in which they securely indulged, as a small particle of dust is inferior to a beam. These proverbial expressions were the more apposite, and the reproof they contained the more galling, that they are both taken from the sayings of Jewish Rabbis. In reference to the first, several parallel expressions have already been quoted: and from Seidelius' collection of Hebrew sentences, the following parallel to the second, is quoted by Bochart: "How sayest thou: Cast the fragment of a mote out of thine eye, while a beam of wood is in thy own?" Another Talmudical author professes his wonder, that any one should suffer himself to be rebuked, when, if any should say, Cast out the mote out of thine eyes, it might be retorted,

* Matth. vii. 3.

Pluck thou the beam out of thine own eyes. Such proverbial expressions were not uncommon among the wiser heathens, of which that adage of Horace, so near a-kin to the one under consideration, is an example :

“ Qui, ne tuberibus propriis offendat amicum.

Postulat, ignoscat, verrucis illius : æquum est

Peccatis veniam poscentem reddere rursus.”

B. 1. Sat. 3. l. 73, &c.

“ He who requires that his friend should not take offence at his own *great* protuberances, should excuse his friend’s *little* warts. It is *but* fair that he who entreats a pardon for his faults, should *be ready* to grant one in his turn.” *Smart.*

The Horse.

The horse is an illustrious instance of creating power and goodness. His beautiful shape, his great muscular strength, his high spirit, his remarkable agility, his extraordinary speed, and above all, his wonderful docility, which fits him for services equally various and important, have been the subject of admiration and praise to the intelligent observers of nature, in every age. To subdue the native wildness of this noble animal, and render him subservient to the purpose of mankind, appears to have been one of their earliest cares ; the success of which, they reckoned, in times of remote antiquity, their highest honour. To have tamed the horse, was the boast of sceptred princes ; and the highest eulogy which the rapturous bard could bestow upon his heroes.

Εὐδοίης, Ἄτρεος υἱὲ διαφρονος, ἵπποδαμοιο. *Hom. b. 2. l. 11.*

The title which Homer in this line bestows on Agamemnon, the commander in chief of the Grecian armies before Troy, he ascribes in another passage to Pelops, another prince of high distinction, calling him the tamer of horses.

Εὐμείας δὲ ἀναξὶ δῶκεν Πέλοπι πλεῖστον ἵππων. *l. 104.*

But He, who gave to Homer all his genius, condescends to celebrate the extraordinary qualities with which he has distinguished this animal.

“Hast thou given the horse strength? Hast thou clothed his neck with thunder? Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper? The glory of his nostrils is terrible. He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength: he goeth on to meet the armed men. He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted: neither turneth he back from the sword. The quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield. He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage: neither believeth he that it is the sound of the trumpet. He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha; and he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains and the shouting*.”

With this inimitable picture, let any reader of taste compare the description which the prince of Latin poets has given of the same quadruped, and the great inferiority will instantly appear.

“The colt of generous breed, from the very first, walks stately in the field, and nimbly moves his pliant legs: he is the first that dares to lead the way, and tempt the threatening floods, and trust himself to an unknown bridge: nor starts affrighted at vain alarms: lofty is his neck; his head little and slender, his belly short, his back plump; and his proud chest swells luxuriant with brawny muscles.—Then, if he hears the distant sound of arms, he knows not how to stand his ground, he pricks up his ears, trembles in every joint, and snorting, rolls the collected fire under his nostrils. Thick is his mane; and waving rests on his right shoulder. A double spinal bone runs down between his loins; his hoof scoops up the ground, and deep resounds with its solid horn†.”

The people of Israel were, by their law, forbidden to multiply horses; for which several reasons may be assigned. The land of Canaan, intersected in almost every direction by hills and mountains, was less adapted to the rearing of horses than other parts of Syria; but the principal reason might be,

* Job xxxix. 19.

† Virgil, 3 *Geor.* l. 75, &c. The learned reader may see another description in *Homer*, b. 15, l. 263.

to discourage the art of war, to which, mankind in all ages have shewn so strong a propensity, which is so hostile to the interests of true religion, of which they were the chosen depositaries, and prevent them from relying for the defence of their country, rather on the strength of their armies, which in the east chiefly consisted of cavalry, than in the promised aid of Jehovah. This wise and salutary command, however, was often disregarded, even by the more pious kings of David's line, who imitated the princes around them in the number and excellence of their horses. Solomon set the first example of transgressing that precept, and of departing from the simplicity of his fathers: "For Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen; and he had a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he bestowed in the cities for chariots, and with the king at Jerusalem *." Josephus informs us, he had twenty thousand horses, which surpassed all others in beauty and swiftness. These were mounted by young men in the bloom of youth, excelling all their countrymen in stature and comeliness, with long flowing hair, habited in rich dresses of Tyrian purple, their hair powdered with gold dust, which, by reflecting the beams of the sun, shed a dazzling splendour around their heads. It was the practice of those in the highest rank of society, in the time of Josephus, to adorn their persons in the gorgeous manner he describes; and the strong partiality which the historian cherished for his country, it is evident, induced him to transfer the extravagance of his own age, to the time of Solomon. The same overweening desire to exalt the power, the riches, and the splendor of his nation, in the most brilliant epoch of her history, has prevailed upon him to contradict the page of inspiration itself, which expressly limits the number of Solomon's horses to twelve thousand.

The sacred historian informs us, that these horses were purchased in Egypt, and in all the surrounding countries †, by

* 1 Kings x. 26.

† 2 Chron. ix. 28.

the Jewish merchants, where the fame of so great a king procured them easy access, and liberal encouragement. It is extremely probable, that Solomon's stud was replenished from regions lying at a very great distance from Jerusalem; but the sacred writers particularly celebrate the breeds of Assyria, Togarmah, and Egypt. The horses of Togarmah were brought to the fairs of Tyre, and were sufficiently numerous and valuable to attract the notice of Ezekiel, who thus addresses the merchant city: "They of the house of Togarmah traded in thy fairs, with horses, and horsemen, and mules*." These, in the opinion of Bochart and other geographers, were the Cappadocians, whose country has been from time immemorial, celebrated for its superior breed of horses. The prophets of Jehovah frequently advert to the admirable qualities of the Assyrian charger. The prophet Isaiah, describing the terrible devastation which the land of Judea was doomed to suffer by the Assyrian armies, warns his people that their horses' hoofs shall be counted like flint—compact and durable as the flinty rock; qualities which, in times when the shoeing of horses was unknown, must have been of very great importance. The value of a solid hoof, has not escaped the notice of Homer's muse, who celebrates, in many passages of his immortal poems, the brazen footed horses.

ὅπ' οὐχ ἔσφι τιτυσκετο χαλκοπόδ' ἵππῳ.

Iliad.

In the admirable instructions which Virgil communicates to the Italian husbandmen, a solid hoof is mentioned as indispensably requisite in a good breed of horses:

— "et solido graviter sonat ungula cornu." 3 *Geor.* l. 88.

The amazing rapidity of their movements, is expressed with much beauty and force in the next clause: "Their wheels shall be like a whirlwind†;" and, with equal felicity, in these words of Jeremiah: "Behold, he shall come up as clouds, and his chariots shall be as a whirlwind; his horses are swifter than eagles‡." The prophet Habakkuk, in describing the

* Ezek. xxvii. 14.

† Isa. v. 28.

‡ Jer. iv. 13.

same quality, uses a different figure, but one equally striking :
 “ Their horses also are swifter than the leopards, and are more fierce than the evening wolves ; and their horsemen shall spread themselves, and their horsemen shall come from far ; they shall fly as the eagle that hasteth to eat *.”

In the sublime language of the prophets, the Assyrian horses are swift as the whirlwind ; a most expressive and beautiful figure, with which the loftiest bards of Greece and Rome have adorned their strains. Thus Homer sings,

Ἰηθούσυνος δὲ ἵπποισιν ἀελλυποδοῖσιν ὀχείτο.

Hymn. in Ven.

And Sophocles, in his *Œdipus Tyrannus*,

Ὦρα νῦν ἀελλυποδῶν ἵππων

Σθεναρῶτερον φυγα ποδᾶ νωμῶν.

“ Now is the time in flight to move the foot swifter than horses who are hurried along like a whirlwind.”

Virgil has more than once imitated, in the adoption of this figure, the Greek poets.

——— “ Tum cursibus auras

Provocat : ac per aperta volans ceu liber habenis

Æquora, vix summa vestigia ponat arena.”

“ Then let him dare the winds in swiftness, and through the open plains flying, as loosened from the reins, scarce print his steps on the surface of the sand.” Nor is Habakkuk content with saying they shall fly ; he adds an important circumstance, which greatly increases the energy of the figure : “ The Assyrian shall fly as the eagle that hasteth to eat.” The eagle, it is universally allowed, soars to a sublimer height, and stretches a more daring and rapid wing through the voids of heaven, especially when impelled by hunger, than any other bird. Homer applies the same figure to Achilles, his favourite hero, who was swift as the black eagle hasting to eat.

Διττᾷ οἶματ' ἐχλὼν μέλανος τᾷ ζήρῃ τῆρος.

Il.

They are swifter, says the prophet, than the leopards : and Lucan compares the furious onset of a warrior, to the rapid spring of the panther.

* Hab. i. 8.

——— “ non segnior extulit illum
Saltus, et in mediis jecit super arma catervas
Quam per summa rapit celerem venabula pardum.”

The Assyrian horse was fiercer than the evening wolves; more sharp sighted, according to some: rather more keen and irritable than these ravenous beasts, when, impelled equally by the voice of instinct and the calls of hunger, they rush from their dens in the evening to seek the prey. These horses, however, which the prophet so loudly celebrates with the view of exhibiting in a stronger light the terrors of Jehovah, were not produced in Assyria itself, but in the neighbouring kingdoms of Armenia, Media, and Persia, which, being long subject to the monarchs of Babylon, were compelled to recruit his armies with the choicest of their youth, and the finest of their horses.

They were conducted to foreign markets in strings; a circumstance “favourable to those interpreters, who would refer the whole passage, 1 Kings x. 28. and 2 Chron. i. 16., to *horses* instead of *linen yarn*, which seems rather to break the connection of the verses. Some are therefore inclined to read; And Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt, even *strings* of horses, (literally, *drawings out,—prolongations*): the king’s merchants received the *strings*, *i. e.* of horses, *in commutation*, exchange or barter. And a chariot, or set of chariot horses, (*i. e.* four), came up from Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and a single horse for one hundred and fifty.”—And these he sold again, at a great profit to the neighbouring kings. As the whole context seems rather applicable to horses than to linen yarn; so, this idea, while it strictly maintains the import of the words, preserves the unity of the passage*.

The Egyptian horses were held in great estimation in Syria and the neighbouring countries. The breed seems to have been introduced into Egypt, at a very remote period; for, the cavalry of Pharaoh was numerous and completely trained to war, when the people of Israel were delivered from his yoke:

* Taylor’s Calmet, vol. 3.

“ But the Egyptians pursued after them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army, and overtook them encamping by the sea*.” The dreadful overthrow which Pharaoh received at the Red sea, did not prevent his successors from again directing their attention to the rearing of horses for the purposes of war : for the numerous and splendid studs of Solomon, were chiefly formed of Egyptian horses ; and in the fifth year of his son Rehoboam, Shishak, king of Egypt, invaded Canaan “ with twelve hundred chariots, and threescore thousand horsemen.” In times long posterior, the prophet Jeremiah addressed the forces of Pharaoh Neco, which the king of Babylon routed near the Euphrates, in these words : “ Harness the horses ; and get up ye horsemen, and stand forth with your helmets.—Come up ye horses ; and rage ye chariots ; and let the mighty men come forth.” From these passages, it may be certainly inferred, that the strength of the Egyptian armies chiefly consisted in cavalry and chariots of war.

The Egyptian horses appear to have been much stronger than the Syrian breed, and by consequence, much more useful in the field. On this account, the prophet Isaiah tells the people of Israel, that “ the Egyptians were men, and not God, and their horses were flesh, and not spirit.” The high estimation in which the Egyptian horses were held, and the eagerness with which the surrounding nations purchased them at exorbitant prices, might be one reason for enacting the law, which forbade the chosen people to multiply horses, that they might not idly waste their substance, and especially, that they might not return again into Egypt, the scene of their grievous oppression, even for the purposes of commerce.

The prophet Isaiah makes an allusion to the horse, which is apt, from the difference of our manners and feelings, to leave an unfavourable impression upon the mind ; it occurs in the sixty-third chapter, and runs in these terms : “ That led them

* Exod. xiv. 9.

through the deep, as an horse in the wilderness, that they should not stumble. As a beast goeth down into the valley, the Spirit of the Lord caused him to rest : so didst thou lead thy people, to make thyself a glorious name*.” If these words be understood, as merely referring to the unobstructed course of a single horse in the plain, and the descent of a beast into the valley to repose,—the allusion, more especially considering the general beauty and sublimity which characterize the style of Isaiah, seems rather flat and mean ; and this is the more surprising, when it is considered, that the prophet is here describing a scene by which the Lord acquired to himself a glorious name, and which, by consequence, demanded no common strength or magnificence of thought. Nor does it appear for what reason, in order to rest, an herd should descend into a valley ; for the hills must be equally pleasing and comfortable places of repose, as the vales. We shall find it in the manners of the Arabian, to which the simile refers ; and a very little attention is necessary to convince a dispassionate inquirer, that the image is both lively and magnificent.

The original Hebrew term (סוס) Sous, in the singular number, denotes both a single horse, and a body of cavalry. In the same manner we use the word horse, to express a single animal of that species, and at other times, the horsemen of an army. In the book of Exodus, Sous denotes the horsemen of Pharaoh's army, who pursued after the tribes of Israel. But if it denote the horse of an Egyptian army, it may, with equal propriety, denote the horse or cavalry of an Arabian tribe. Now, Arabian horse are remarkable for the surprising swiftness with which they escape the hottest pursuit of their enemies. In two hours after an alarm is given, they strike their tents, and with their families, and their whole property, they plunge into the deepest recesses of their sandy deserts, which the boldest and most exasperated enemy dares not invade. In the time of De la Roque, the great emir of mount Carmel, had a mare

* Isa. lxiii. 13, 14.

which he valued at more than five thousand crowns. The Arabians, it seems, prefer the female to the male, because it is more gentle, silent, and able to endure fatigue, hunger, and thirst; qualities in which, they have found from experience, the former excels the latter. The mare which the emir or prince of Carmel rode, had carried him three days and three nights together, without eating or drinking, and by this means effectually saved him from the pursuit of his enemies*.

This account entirely removes the apparent meanness of the prophetic representation, and imparts a liveliness and dignity to the description. At the moment when Pharaoh and his army thought the people of Israel was completely in their power, shut in by the sea and the mountains, that they could not escape,—like the Arab horsemen, they decamped, and through the sea marched into the desert, whither their enemies were unable to follow.

If the Arabian horses are not so sure footed as the mule, which Dr Shaw affirms, it will account for the next clause in the same verse: “As an horse in the wilderness, they should not stumble.” The departure of Israel from the land of Egypt was sudden, and their movements were rapid, like those of an Arab, whom his enemy has surprised in his camp; yet no misfortune befel them in their retreat, as at times overtakes the swiftest and surest footed horses.

The next verse may be explained by the same custom: “As a beast or herd goeth down into the valley, so the Spirit of the Lord caused him to rest.” The Arab, decamping at the first alarm, marches off with his flocks and his herds, his wife and children, into the burning deserts. This he does not from choice, but for safety; and by consequence, how proper and agreeable so ever the hills may be for pasturage, in times of alarm or danger, the deep sequestered valley must be far more desirable. The custom of the Arabs in Barbary, stated by Dr Shaw, finely illustrates this figure. About the middle of the

* Harmer's Obs.

afternoon, his party began to look out for the encampment of some Arabian horde, who, to prevent such numerous parties as his from living at free charges upon them, take care to pitch in woods, valleys, or places the least conspicuous. And he confesses, that if they had not discovered their flocks, the smoke of their tents, or heard the barking of their dogs, they had either not found the encampment at all, or with extreme difficulty.

In the same manner, after the people of Israel had escaped from the hosts of Egypt, they pitched their tents in the wilderness, undisturbed by their former oppressors; or, save once or twice, by the roving inhabitants of these frightful solitudes.

The Arab who traverses the desert, from the perpetual state of warfare in which he lives, and the rapid movements he is accordingly compelled to make, is chiefly concerned about the swiftness of his horse; but the Egyptian, occupying a fixed and quiet habitation, enervated by luxury, and fond of splendid shows and processions, adorns his courser with magnificent trappings, and teaches him to move with a slow and pompous step. The horses of Egypt have long been celebrated for their height, their plumpness, and the stateliness of their pace. Corpulency is regarded as a leading character of beauty in several regions of Africa, and perhaps in other eastern countries; and even a lady to be counted beautiful, must be fat *. Upon this principle is founded the compliment of Solomon, which may seem rather coarse to a mere English reader: "I have compared thee, O my love, to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots †." It is remarkable, that the elegant Theocritus in his epithalamium, celebrates the portly size, and plumpness of Helen, the most celebrated beauty of ancient times, and uses exactly the same image as Solomon, comparing her to the horse in the chariots of Thessaly.

Many heathen nations consecrated horses to the sun; because

* Niebuhr's Trav.

† Song i. 9.

he was imagined to be carried round the heavens in a chariot. The idolatrous kings of Judah, imbued with the same superstition, dedicated the best of their stud to that luminary ; and in contempt of the true God, placed them at the principal gate of his temple. This impious and absurd practice, the great and good Josiah abolished, when he reformed the numerous abuses which his predecessors had introduced or tolerated in the religious worship of that fickle and perverse nation : “ And he took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun, at the entering of the house of the Lord, by the chamber of Nathan-melech, the chamberlain, which was in the suburbs, and burned the chariots of the sun with fire*.”

By those horses cannot well be understood, as the greater part of modern interpreters maintain, a number of sculptured figures of gold, silver, or brass, which had been presented as votive offerings to the heathen deity. The words of the sacred historian certainly refer to living horses, for he simply states, that Josiah “ took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given, or dedicated to the sun :” but had the figures of horses been intended, the clause, to correspond with the common manner of the sacred writers, must have run in these terms, He took away the horses of gold, of silver, or of brass ; for in this way, the molten calf of Aaron, the serpent of Moses, and the lions and oxen of Solomon, are distinguished in Scripture from the real animals. Nor had he distinguished in one statue the horses from the chariot ; nor assigned to them a particular station, between the temple and the house of Nathan-melech ; because they were parts and appendices of the same general figure. Besides, the destruction of the horses was effected by one operation, and the chariots by another : which shews that they were not metallic figures : Josiah took away, or (as the verb is rendered in other parts), destroyed the horses, but he burned the chariots in the fire.

These horses were given or dedicated to the sun, to be of-

* 2 Kings xxiii. 11.

ferred in sacrifice to that luminary, according to some writers; or kept in honour of Baal, or Apollo, as others imagine. The Jewish writers allege, that the priests of the sun led them forth at the dawn, with great pomp, into a large area, between the temple and the house of Nathan-melech, to salute their god, as soon as he appeared above the horizon.

The Ass.

Natural historians mention two varieties of this animal, the domestic and the wild ass; but it is to the former our attention at present is to be directed. His colour is generally a reddish brown; a circumstance to which he owes his name in the Hebrew text; for (חמור) hamor is derived from a verb which signifies to be red or dun. This appears to have been the predominating colour in the oriental regions; but we learn from the song of Deborah, that some asses were white; and on this account, reserved for persons of high rank in the state. The term (אֶתוֹן) athon is another name for that creature, from a root which signifies to be firm or strong; because he is equal to a greater load than any animal of the same size. To this quality Jacob alluded in his last benediction: "Issachar is a strong ass, couching down between two burdens*." Or, it may refer to the stubborn temper for which he is remarkable, and the stupid insensibility which enables him to disregard the severest castigation, till he has accomplished his purpose. These qualities are beautifully described by Homer, in the 11th book of the Iliad; but the passage is too long to be quoted.

In the patriarchal ages, the breed of this animal, which we regard with so much unmerited contempt, was greatly encouraged, and constituted no inconsiderable portion of wealth among oriental shepherds. It is on this account the number of asses in the herds of Abram, and other patriarchs, are so frequently stated by Moses, in the book of Genesis. So highly were they valued in those times of primitive simplicity, that they were

* Gen. xlix. 14.

formed into separate droves, and committed to the management of princes, and other persons of distinction. The sacred historian informs us, that Anah, a Horite prince, did not think it unbecoming his dignity to feed the asses of Zibeon his father *: and that the sons of Jacob seized the asses of Shechem and his people, and drove them away, with the sheep and the oxen †. During the seven years of famine that wasted the land of Egypt, and reduced the people to the greatest distress, Joseph purchased their asses, and gave them corn to preserve them alive ‡. When the people of Israel subdued the Midianites, they carried away “threescore and one thousand asses.” In times long posterior, Saul the son of Kish, was sent in quest of his father’s asses, which had strayed from their pasture; and he was engaged in this service, when the prophet Samuel received a command to anoint him king over Israel. After David’s accession to the throne, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies, he appointed Jehdeiah the Meronothite, a prince in Israel, to superintend this part of his property.

Nor was this animal unworthy of such attention and care. His humility, patience, and temperance, qualities in which he greatly excels, eminently fitted him for the service of man. His great value was soon discovered, and he was preferred even to the horse, for many domestic purposes. The sons of Jacob employed him to carry burdens of every kind; and he seems to have been the only quadruped they took with them in their repeated journeys into Egypt, to purchase corn for their households; and their descendants continued for many ages to employ him in the same manner. The fruits of the field, the produce of the vineyard, provisions, and merchandise of all kinds, were carried on the backs of asses.

He was long used for the saddle in the oriental regions; and persons of high rank appeared in public, mounted on this animal. Those which the great and wealthy selected for their use, were larger and more elegant animals than the mean and

* Gen. xxxvi. 24.

† Ch. xxxiv. 28.

‡ Ch. xlvii. 17.

unshapely creature with which we are acquainted. Dr Russel, in his history of Aleppo, mentions a variety of the ass in Syria, much larger than the common breed; and other travellers say, that some of them in Persia are kept like horses for the saddle, which have smooth hair, carry their heads well, and are quicker in their motions than the ordinary kind, which are dressed like horses, and taught to amble like them*.

We learn from Niebuhr, that in Egypt the asses are very handsome, and are used for riding by the greater part of the Mahometans, and by the most distinguished women of that country. The same variety serves for the saddle in Persia and Arabia; and must therefore have been common in Palestine. They are descended from tamed *onagers*, which are taken young, and sold for a high price to the nobles of Persia, and the adjacent countries, for their studs. They cost seventy-five ducats; and Tavernier says, that fine ones are sold in Persia dearer than horses, even to an hundred crowns each. He distinguishes them properly from the baser race of ordinary asses, which are employed in carrying* loads. These saddle asses, the issue of *onagers*, are highly commended by all travellers into the Levant. Like the wild *onager*, they are extremely swift and rapid in their course; of a slender form, and animated gait. They have vigorous faculties, and can discern obstacles readily; at the sight of danger they emit a kind of cry; they are obstinate to excess, when beaten behind, or when they are put out of their way, or when attempts are made to control them against their will: they are also familiar and attached to their master. These particulars exactly correspond with several incidents in the history of Balaam's ass; from whence it may be inferred, that he rode one of the superior breed, and by consequence, was a person of considerable wealth and eminence in his own country. The high value which people of rank and fashion in the east set upon that noble race of asses, excludes them from the purchase of the common-

* Essays on Sacred Zoology, Christ, Mag, vol. 6. Ass.

alty, and restricts the possession of them to the great, or the affluent *. This fact is confirmed by the manner in which the sacred writers express themselves on this subject.

To ride upon an ass was, in the days of the Judges, a mark of distinction, to which it is probable, the vulgar might not presume to aspire. This is evident from the brief notices which the inspired historian gives of the greatness and riches of Jair, the Gileadite, one of these judges: "he had thirty sons that rode on thirty ass colts; and they had thirty cities, which are called Havoth-jair unto this day†." Abdon the Pirathonite, another of these judges, "had forty sons and thirty nephews, that rode on threescore and ten ass colts.‡." It is reasonable to suppose, that the manners and customs of the chosen tribes underwent a change when the government became monarchical, and the fascinating pleasures of a court began to exert their usual influence; still, however, the ass kept his place in the service of the great. Mephibosheth, the grandson of Saul, rode on an ass; as did Ahitophel, the prime minister of David, and the greatest statesman of that age. Even so late as the reign of Jehoram, the son of Ahab, the services of this animal were required by the wealthy Israelite: the Shunamite, a person of high rank, saddled her ass, and rode to Carmel, the residence of Elisha, to announce the death of her son to the prophet, and to solicit his assistance§.

But as the number of horses increased in Judea, and people of rank and fashion became fonder of pomp and show, the movements of the nobler and statelier animal were preferred to the rapid, but less dignified, motions of the ass. This change, it is reasonable to suppose, began to take place from the accession of Solomon to the throne of Israel; for that rich and splendid prince, collected a very numerous stud of the finest horses that Egypt and Arabia could furnish. One thing is certain, that after the Jews returned from their long captivity in Babylon,

* Taylor's Calmet, vol. 4. Wild ass, and other asses of the East.

† Jud. x. 3, 4.

‡ Jud. xiv. 13, 14.

§ 2 Kings iv. 8, 21.

the great and fashionable, for the most part, rode the horse or the mule. The ass was resigned to the use of the lower orders; and it quickly became a mark of poverty and meanness to appear in public on that animal. This important change in the sentiments and customs of the Jews, enables us to understand how the public entry of our Lord into Jerusalem, riding on a young ass, could have been foretold by the prophet Zechariah, as an instance of his meekness and humility: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy king cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation, lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass*." On that memorable occasion, by returning to the primitive simplicity which marked the conduct of their fathers, he poured contempt on the pride of human glory; he put honour upon the law, which prohibited the chosen people to multiply horses, lest they should imbibe the spirit, and engage in the ruinous enterprises of warlike nations; and he displayed at once, the mildness of his administration, and the unaffected meekness and lowliness of his character.

The saddle ass, retaining the characteristic perverseness of his kind, is apt to become restive under his rider, which, in cases that require haste, renders it necessary to accelerate his speed by means of the goad. This, according to Pococke, is commonly done for persons of rank by a servant on foot. This method of travelling seems to have been quite common in Palestine; for the Shunamite's husband expressed neither surprise nor hesitation, when she asked "one of the young men, and one of the asses, that she might run to the man of God." The acknowledged inability of the ass to carry both the servant and his mistress, the custom of having an attendant, whose business it was to drive the animal forward, and the eager impatience of the bereaved mother, which required the utmost speed, sufficiently prove that she rode the ass herself, while the servant attended her on foot, or mounted perhaps on a

* Zech. ix. 9.

† 2 Kings iv. 8.

camel, which persons in his condition often used on a journey. "And she said to her servant, Drive (or lead), and go forward; slack not riding for me, except I bid thee." Put him to his utmost speed, without regarding the inconveniencies I may suffer. The pronoun *thy*, it has been thought, is very improperly supplied in our translation, as it leads one to suppose, that the servant himself was the rider. But although no mention is made of the circumstance, it is not perfectly clear that the servant was not mounted on this occasion. The phrase, cease not to ride, (לִרְכֹּב), or cease not riding, naturally suggests that he was mounted. The ass which the Shunamite saddled, was a strong animal, as the name given him by the inspired writer imports; and if we may believe Maillet, the asses in Egypt and Syria have nothing of that indolence and heaviness which are natural to ours; therefore, if the servant was not furnished with a camel, or was not a running footman by profession, of which we have no proof, the ass must have soon left him far behind, and rendered his services of no use.

When the inspired writer says the Shunamite *saddled her ass*, he uses a phrase which often occurs in the sacred writings, and seems to comprehend every requisite for the convenience of the rider and the proper management of the animal. Solomon, in one of his proverbs, mentions "a bridle for the ass," which might be used both for ornament and use. It was necessary to subdue the stubborn and froward temper of the animal, which would not otherwise submit to the direction of his rider. Furnished by nature with a hard and dry skin, he feels the severest application of a whip so little, that he bears it with indifference. His neck, as stiff as his disposition is intractable, yields with difficulty to the bridle; almost every thing else he disregards. The bridle, therefore, is as necessary to tame the perverse temper, and guide the reluctant step of the ass, as is the whip to subdue the fiery or impatient spirit of the Arabian or Egyptian horse, which cannot be rode with safety till they have learned to respect its discipline. These facts en-

tirely remove the difficulty that encumbers the proverb: "A whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass, and a rod for the fool's back." In the east, the horse was taught only two motions, to walk in state, or to push forward in full career; a bridle was therefore unnecessary, and seldom used, except for mere ornament; the voice, or the hand of his master, was sufficient to direct his way or to stop his course. While the ass reluctantly submits to the control of the bridle, he presents his back with stupid insensibility to the rod. This instrument of correction is, therefore, reserved for the fool, and is necessary to subdue the vicious propensities of his heart, and turn him from the error of his way.

The ancient Israelites preferred the young ass for the saddle. It is on this account, the sacred writers so frequently mention riding on young asses and on ass colts. They must have found them from experience, like the young of all animals, more tractable, lively, and active than their parents, and by consequence, better adapted to this employment. Buffon remarked particularly of the young ass, that it is a gay, nimble, and gentle animal, "and therefore, to be preferred for riding to the same animal, when become lazy and stubborn through age." "Indeed, the Hebrew name of the young ass, עֵיִר, from a root which signifies to rouse or excite, "is expressive of its character for sprightliness and activity*."

On public and solemn occasions, they adorned the asses which they rode, with rich and splendid trappings. "In this manner," says an excellent writer of *Essays on sacred Zoology*, "the magistrates in the time of the Judges, appear to have rode in state. They proceeded to the gate of their city, where they sat to hear causes, in slow procession, mounted on asses superbly caparisoned with white cloth, which covered the greater part of the animal's body. It is thus that we must interpret the words of Deborah: 'Speak ye that ride on white asses,' on asses caparisoned with coverings made of white

* Sacred Zool. Christ. Mag. vol. 6.

woollen cloth, 'ye that sit in judgment, and walk,' or march in state 'by the way.' The colour is not that of the animal, but of his *hiran* or covering, for the ass is commonly dun, and not white."

No doubt can be entertained in relation to the existence of the custom alluded to in this quotation. It prevails among the Arabs to the present day; but it appears rather unnatural, to ascribe the colour of a covering to the creature that wears it. We do not call a man white or black, because he happens to be dressed in vestments of white or black cloth; neither did the Hebrews. The expression naturally suggests the colour of the animal itself, not of its trappings; and the only point to be ascertained, is, whether the ass is found of a white colour. Buffon informs us, that the colour of the ass is not dun but flaxen, and the belly of a silvery white. In many instances, the silvery white predominates; for Cartwright, who travelled into the east, affirms, that he beheld on the banks of the Euphrates, great droves of wild beasts, among which, were many wild asses all white. Oppian describes the wild ass, as having a coat of silvery white; and the one which professor GMELIN brought from Tartary, was of the same colour. Even among the degenerate breed of our own country, some very beautiful white asses are sometimes to be found. As the Hebrews always appeared in white garments at their public festivals and on days of rejoicing, or when the courts of justice were held; so, they naturally preferred white asses, because the colour suited the occasion, and because asses of this colour being more rare and costly, were more coveted by the great and the wealthy.

The female ass was more highly valued among the orientals, than the male. Indeed, a considerable portion of their wealth sometimes consisted of female asses. These, it appears from several passages of Scripture, were preferred for the saddle. The ass which Balaam rode, is distinguished by the sacred historian as a female. It was convenience probably, which led

them to this choice; for no other animal, it is said, can subsist so easily in a barren and uncultivated country. The female is recommended by another advantage, which is of very great value in those torrid climates; if she can only find a few leaves, some coarse grass, and a little water, she nourishes with her milk, the weary or exhausted traveller. These facts afford an easy answer to the question, Why, in the book of Job, the sacred writer in the statement of his vast riches, mentions only the female asses? “His substance also, was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses*.” The female ass was more easily managed, more hardy and durable, and rewarded the trifling care of her rider with a pleasant and nutritious beverage.

In some countries, this animal is employed in war. Strabo relates, that some of the Scythian hordes appeared in the field of battle, mounted on asses, and offered an ass in sacrifice to the god of war; and Dr Brown states in his Travels, that the troops of a small principality lying to the west of Egypt, resolving to interrupt his progress, or to plunder his baggage, mounted their asses and commenced a hot pursuit. The ass appears to have been occasionally yoked to the chariot; for the prophet Isaiah, predicting the fall of Babylon by the Medes and Persians, describes the watchman as seeing “a chariot with a couple of horsemen, a chariot of asses, and a chariot of camels†.” Herodotus expressly says, the Indians had chariots of war drawn by wild asses. This part of the vision, it must be admitted, is involved in some obscurity from the ambiguity of the term (רֶכֶב) *Recheb*, which is used three times, and signifies a chariot or vehicle of any kind, the rider in it, or even a rider on horseback, or a company of chariots or riders. We learn from the faithful page of history, that Cyrus in his engagement with Cræsus, mounted part of his cavalry on camels, and that the mule is sometimes yoked to the chariot in Persia; but it is by no means improbable, that some troops in the army

* Job i 3.

† Isa. xxi. 7.

of Cyrus, might, according to the custom of remote antiquity, be mounted on asses, which ancient writers aver, are invincible in battle, and never known to flee before an enemy. Interpreters, however, rather suppose, but without sufficient reason, that "the vision represents the combined army of the Medes and Persians in full march to the siege of Babylon, with an immense train of followers, after the manner of the east, conveying their baggage and stores; the cavalry of both nations mounted, some on chariots, and others on horseback; while the warlike apparatus and provisions of the Persians, according to the custom of their country, were carried on asses, and those of the Medes, according to their custom, on camels." The whole description refers more naturally to the cavalry and chariots of war, of which some were drawn by asses.

As a beast of burden, the ass is of considerable value, particularly in the oriental regions. Of all animals, Buffon observes, the ass is perhaps the one, which, in proportion to its size, can carry the greatest weight. To this important circumstance, one of its names in Hebrew, as has been already remarked, is universally admitted to refer. The great muscular strength of this animal, was strikingly displayed in the reign of David, on a very memorable occasion. When that renowned monarch was driven from his capital by the rebellion of an unnatural son, Ziba, the treacherous servant of Mephibosheth, sent him "a couple of asses saddled, and upon them, two hundred loaves of bread, and an hundred bunches of raisins, and an hundred of summer fruits, and a bottle of wine*:" and yet, this load so disproportionate to their size, did not seem to have fatigued them greatly, for immediately on their arrival, they were employed to carry the king's household.

The ancient Israelites, and other eastern nations, very often availed themselves of the services of this athletic and submissive animal, in the carriage of goods. When the sons of Jacob went down into Egypt, to purchase corn for the use of

* 2 Sam. xvi. 1.

their families, they took with them no other beast of burden, although their father was the proprietor of many camels. That country was already in possession of an excellent breed of horses; yet when Joseph sent a present of its "good things" to his venerable parent, he made choice of the ass to carry them. In the course of ages, when affairs of state, or mercantile transactions, required greater dispatch, and more attention to economy, the prodigious strength of the camel gradually superseded the inferior power and patient industry of the ass; yet, in the days of Isaiah, we find him still keeping his place among beasts of burden, and even joined with the camel in carrying to Egypt, the costly presents with which the king of Judah endeavoured to conciliate the mind of Pharaoh, and procure his powerful aid against the hostile armies of Assyria. "They will carry their riches upon the shoulders of young asses, and their treasures upon the bunches of camels, to a people that shall not profit them*;" that shall not be able to prevent the ravaging of their country, the capture of their fortified places, and the siege of their capital.

The ass is not more remarkable for his power to sustain, than for his patience and tranquillity when oppressed by an unequal load. Like the camel, he quietly submits to the heaviest burden; he bears it peaceably, till he can proceed no further; and when his strength fails him, instead of resisting or endeavouring to throw off the oppressive weight, he contentedly lies down, and rests himself under it, recruits his vigour with the provender that may be offered him, and then, at the call of his master, proceeds on his journey. To this trait in the character of that useful animal, the dying patriarch evidently refers, when, under the afflatus of inspiration, he predicts the future lot and conduct of Issachar and his descendants. "Issachar is a strong ass, couching down between two burdens. And he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant, and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a

* Isa. xxx. 6.

servant unto tribute*.” This tribe, naturally dull and stupid, should, like the creature by which they were characterized, readily submit to the vilest master and the meanest service. Although, like the ass, possessed of ability, if properly exerted and rightly directed, to shake off the inglorious yoke of servitude, they would basely submit to the insults of the Phenicians on the one hand, and the Samaritans on the other. Issachar was a strong ass, “able,” says a sprightly writer, “to refuse a load, as well as to bear it; but, like the passive drudge which symbolized him, he preferred inglorious ease to the resolute vindication of his liberty; a burden of tribute, to the gains of a just and well regulated freedom; and a yoke of bondage, to the doubtful issues of war.”

The oriental husbandman was not less indebted to this creature for his services, than the statesman and the merchant. The ox and the ass laboured together in the cultivation of the same field, and submitted their necks to the same yoke. To these facts, the prophet Isaiah evidently refers, in the following prediction: “The oxen likewise, and the young asses, that ear (or till) the ground, shall eat clean provender, which hath been winnowed with the shovel and with the fan†.” In these words, he foretels a season of great plenty, when the cattle shall be fed with corn better in quality, separated from the chaff, and (as the term rendered *clean* in our version, properly signifies) acidulated, in order to render it more grateful to their taste. The evangelist clearly refers to the practice, which was common in every part of Syria, of ploughing with the ass, when he calls him, *προζυγιον*, a creature subject to the yoke‡. In rice grounds, which require to be flooded, the ass was employed to prepare them for the seed, by treading them with his feet. It is to this method of preparing the ground, that Chardin supposes the prophet to allude when he says, “Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters, that send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass§.” They shall be

* Gen. xlix. 14.

† Isa. xxx. 24.

‡ Mat. xxi. 5.

§ Isa. xxxii. 20.

blessed under the future reign of the promised Messiah. In times anterior to his appearing, their country was to be made a desolation; briars and thorns were to encumber their fields; their sumptuous dwellings were to be cast down; their cities and strongholds were to be levelled with the dust. But when Messiah commences his reign, times of unequalled prosperity shall begin their career. The goodness of Jehovah shall descend in fertilizing showers, to irrigate their fields, and to swell the streams which the skill and industry of the husbandman conducts among his plantations, or with which he covers his rice grounds. Secure from the ruinous incursions of aliens, and in the sure hope of an abundant harvest, he shall scatter his rice on the face of the superincumbent water, and tread it into the miry soil with "the feet of the ox and the ass." Prosperous and happy himself, he will consider it his duty, and feel it his delight, "to do good and to communicate,"—to succour the widow and the fatherless, to open his doors to the stranger, to diffuse around him the light of truth, and to swell, by the diligent and prudent use of all the means that Providence has brought within his reach, the sum of human enjoyment.

In the sandy fields of Syria and Egypt, where deep ploughing, by draining off the moisture necessary to vegetation, would be hurtful, a single ass is occasionally seen drawing the plough. The implement employed, is made to correspond with the strength of the animal; it is so light, "that a man of moderate strength," says Dr Russel, "may easily carry it with one hand; a little cow, or at most two, and sometimes only an ass, is sufficient to draw it *." But this is done only in very light soils; where the ground is stiffer, and a deeper furrow required, two beasts are yoked together in one plough. In Syria, where the distinction between clean and unclean beasts did not exist, and where unnatural associations were disregarded, they very often joined an ox and an ass in the same

* Russel's Hist. of Aleppo.

yoke. But the law of Moses prohibited, by an express statute, such incongruous mixtures: "Thou shalt not plough with an ox and an ass together." The chosen people might employ them both in tilling their ground; but, in every instance, they were to be joined only with those of their own species. This precept embraced at once, the benefit of the tribes, and the comfort of their cattle. The benevolent legislator would not have animals of unequal strength, and of discordant habits and dispositions, forced into a union to which they are naturally averse, and where the labour could not be equally divided. But Jehovah, whose care extends to the happiness even of an ox or an ass, had certainly a higher object in view. He meant, by this prohibition, to instruct his people to preserve, with solicitude, the unaffected simplicity of the patriarchal ages, in their manner of living; to avoid unnatural associations among themselves, and undue familiarity with the idolatrous nations around them, by contracting marriages with them, entering into alliances, or engaging in extensive mercantile transactions, still more, by joining in the impure rites of their worship. To this moral aspect of the law, the great apostle of the Gentiles evidently refers in his charge to the Corinthians: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness*?"

Some faint traces of this law, which recommends itself to every humane and well regulated mind, may be found in the writings of ancient heathens. Plautus, in one of his plays, condemns the practice of yoking together the ox and the ass, because their strength is so different; and for the same reason, Ulysses was reckoned insane, because he joined a horse and an ass to his plough. Homer, in his *Odyssey*, advises to couple beasts that can bear an equal weight; and Ovid remonstrates against the practice of bringing to the plough bullocks of unequal strength.

* 2 Cor. vi. 14.

“*Quam male ineqiales veniunt ad aratra juveni?*”

They could discern the inhumanity of the custom, but of its relation to moral impurity they had no conception.

After the ass had assisted in gathering the crop into the garner, he was often sent, in primitive times, to drive the milstone, which was to convert it into meal. To this kind of labour, the Lord Jesus undoubtedly alludes, in his declaration to the disciples: “It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him through whom they come! It were better for him that a milstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones*.” The original phrase *μυλος ονικος* signifies a milstone, so large, that it cannot be turned about by the hand, according to the more common way of grinding corn in the east, but must be driven by an ass. How various and important are the services which this humble creature renders to his master! He serves him for riding, for bearing his burdens, drawing the plough, treading in the grain into the flooded soil, turning the milstone; and to all these services, the female adds the nutritious beverage of her milk. To the poor man, therefore, a single ass might prove an invaluable treasure. In many cases, it was the principal means of support to himself and his family; a circumstance which accounts for the energetic language respecting this animal, in some passages of Scripture. To “drive away the ass of the fatherless,” Job denounces as a deed of atrocity, which none but a proud and unfeeling oppressor could be guilty of perpetrating†.

The services of this useful animal were not sufficient, even in times of primitive simplicity, to save him from every kind of abuse. At one time he suffers from neglect; at another from oppressive labour; and seldom experiences, from ungrateful man, the kindness and indulgence to which he is fairly entitled. From the watchful care of his creator, however, he has not been excluded: even to his subsistence, comfort, and ease, the

* Luke xvii. 12.

† Job xxiv. 3.

gracious attention of heaven has been directed. And while he admits that he made him for the benefit of man, and protects his owner in the quiet possession of him, as a valuable part of his property ; by the awful sanctions of the moral law, he makes it an imperative duty to treat him as a sentient being, capable of suffering, and of enjoyment. It is accordingly assigned as one reason for the strict observance of the sabbath, “ That thine ox and thine ass may rest*.” But it is not sufficient to suspend his usual toil during that holy day ; he must neither be resigned to want, nor exposed to harsh or inhuman treatment : the compassion of God requires “ to loose him from the stall, and lead him away to watering† ;” and should he fall into a pit, straightway to pull him out‡. Nor must the fault of the master be visited upon his unoffending servant ; the Israelite was commanded, under pain of divine anger, to bring back the ass of his greatest enemy, which he found going astray, and to assist in raising him up when fallen under his load. In these admirable precepts, the God of mercy regards the ox and the ass with equal indulgence ; and, as the latter was more exposed to injurious treatment, he condescends to secure his safety and comfort by additional and particular enactments ; exhibiting an example of tender concern for the happiness of the meanest of his creatures, which can hardly be too frequently contemplated, and certainly never too closely imitated.

The man of benevolence, who treats even his ass with kindness, shall not lose his reward. Besides the approbation of God and his own conscience, he shall be attended with the affectionate attachment of the animal himself. Dull and stupid as he is, the ass, according to Buffon, smells his master at a distance, searches the places and roads which he used to frequent, and easily distinguishes him from the rest of mankind. An equal degree of gratitude is not always to be found among rational beings, towards their greatest and best benefactor. The ass, although destitute of reason, and even duller than

* Exod. xxiii. 12.

† Luke xiii. 5.

‡ Ch. xiv. 5.

many other animals, although commonly hard wrought, and unkindly treated, discovers an attachment to his master, which the people of Israel did not feel for the living God, who daily loaded them with his benefits. This trait in his character, gives uncommon poignancy to the prophet's reproof: "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib;" they are not insensible to the kindness of their benefactors: "but Israel doth not know" the God of his salvation, "my people doth not consider" from whose hand they receive all their blessings, nor what return they owe to him for his unmerited kindness*.

Among the Jews, the ass was considered as an unclean animal, because it neither divides the hoof nor chews the cud. It could neither be used as food, nor offered in sacrifice. The firstling of an ass, like those of camels, horses, and other unclean animals, was to be redeemed with the sacrifice of a lamb, or deprived of life. • In cases of extreme want, however, this law was disregarded; for when the Syrian armies besieged Samaria, the inhabitants were so reduced, that "an ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver†." Some writers, however, contend, that the term חמור *hamor* does not signify an ass, in this passage, but is the same as חומר, *homer*, a certain measure of grain. But this view of the passage cannot be admitted. We know what is meant by the head of an ass; but the head of a homer, or measure of wheat or barley, is quite unintelligible. Nor could the sacred writer say with propriety, that the city was suffering by a "great famine," while a homer of grain was sold for eighty pieces of silver; for in the next chapter he informs us, that, after the flight of the Syrians, and provisions of every kind, by the sudden return of plenty, were reduced to the lowest price, "a measure of fine flour (which is the thirtieth part of a homer,) was sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria." Besides, had the historian intended a measure of corn, he would not have said indefinitely, a homer was sold for eighty pieces of silver;

* Is. i. 3.

† 2 Kings vi. 25.

but a homer of wheat, or of barley, or of oats, which are not of the same value. The prophet accordingly says, in the beginning of the next chapter, “a measure of fine flour shall be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley, for a shekel:” And John, in the book of Revelation; “a measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny.” Our translators, therefore, have taken a just view of this text, and given a correct version.

It is reasonable to suppose, that the ass was not the last to suffer in the siege of Samaria. Hardly treated in times of peace and abundance, he must have been left to shift for himself in such circumstances, in a place where the hunger of the inhabitants compelled them to devour every green thing; and have rapidly sunk into a poor and wretched condition. How great must that famine have been, and how dreadful the distress to which the people were reduced, when they gave three times the price of the live animal, for that part of him, which could yield them at any time, only a few pounds of dry and unpalatable food, but when emaciated by famine, only a few morsels of carrion. Extreme must have been the sufferings which extinguished the powerful influence of religious principle, and natural aversion to a species of food so disagreeable and pernicious; and not only prevailed upon them to use it, but even to devour it with greediness.

The neglect and contempt which follow this animal through life, do not forsake him even in death. His carcase, furnishing no desirable repast to people of any condition, is ignominiously cast out into the open field, to feed the wild beasts and the ravenous birds; or tumbled into the nearest ditch, where it is left to moulder into dust. “The burial of an ass,” was accordingly reckoned, in Old Testament ages, the last disgrace to which the body of a criminal or an unfortunate could be doomed. To this most dishonourable end, the prophet Jeremiah, by the command of heaven, condemned Jehoiakim the king of Judah. The sentence, than which we can scarcely

conceive one more galling to an oriental ear, is couched in these terms: "His dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost*." "They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah, my brother, or Ah my sister! They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah, Lord! or Ah, his glory! He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem†." "Not that Jehoiakim should have so disgraceful an end in the vicinity of Jerusalem, as is commonly supposed, for he was carried to Babylon, and in all probability died there; but that, in the land of his captivity, he should die contemned and neglected by the Babylonians, and unregretted even by his captive countrymen; and, that his carcase should be treated with all the neglect with which the inhabitants of Jerusalem were accustomed to treat their dead asses, which they dragged out of the city, and cast forth to corrupt or be devoured‡."

The Mule.

The Hebrews ascribe the invention of mules to Anah, the son of Zibeon, whose daughter, Aholibamah, was given in marriage to Esau§. "This was that Anah, that found the mules in the wilderness, as he fed the asses of Zibeon his father." In this text, Moses evidently censures the misguided and preposterous industry of Anah, who, not satisfied with the numerous flocks and herds which the bounty of Providence had bestowed on his family, or, perhaps actuated by impure and licentious motives, contrived a new and spurious breed of animals unknown to nature, and contrary to the laws which regulate her operations. Whatever might be the motive, the conduct of this Horite prince, was certainly criminal. We cannot, on any other supposition, account for the peculiar and emphatical phrase which Moses employs: "This was that Anah, that found the mules in the wilderness." In opposition to this idea, Bochart contends, that if Anah had found

* Jer. xxxvi. 30. † Ch. xxii. 18. ‡ Essays on Sac. Zool. Christ. Mag. vol. 6.
§ Gen. xxxvi. 24.

out the method of procreating mules, the sacred historian would not have said he found them; because the verb (מָצָא) *matsa*, among the Hebrews, does not signify to invent, but to find something already in existence. Nor to strengthen this conjecture, is it sufficient, that Anah is said at the time to have tended the asses of Zibeon his father; for mules are not procreated of asses only, but of an ass and a mare, or of a horse and a female ass. But of horses or wild asses, by whose union with the domestic ass a mule is generated, no mention is made in this passage. In addition to these arguments, our author insists on the improbability, that the method of generating mules was discovered in Idumæa at that early period; because, the use of these animals does not seem to have become common in Judea, till the reign of David, about five hundred years after the death of Anah. No mention is made of mules in the flocks and herds of Abraham, of Isaac, of Job, and other shepherd princes of the east. In the various enumerations, horses, camels, asses, oxen, sheep, and goats, are expressly mentioned, but in relation to mules, the profoundest silence is uniformly observed; hence, Bochart argues, that the origin of mules is involved in great uncertainty.

But the assertion of that celebrated writer, that the Hebrew verb (מָצָא) *matsa*, signifies only to find, not to invent, is incorrect. In Leigh's *Critica Sacra*, it signifies also to procure for himself by labour and industry; and in Parkhurst, the seventh sense is, to obtain, to procure. According to these respectable authors, the text may be rendered, This was that Anah, who, by labour and industry, procured for himself mules in the wilderness, which is quite consistent with the common exposition. If Anah did not invent the method of procreating mules, but only found them already existing, what can the sacred writer mean by the emphatical phrase, He, Anah; or, as in our version, This was that Anah? What was so remarkable or important in a person merely finding a knot of mules in the wilderness, that Moses should reckon it necessary to use such

emphatical terms? And what reason can be given, that he takes not the smallest notice of those who found horses, or camels, or asses in the wilderness, although some individual must have found and reduced them to a state of servitude? Something unusual and peculiar, is certainly intended in the phrase which Moses employs; and what can that be, but the invention of a new breed of animals. The want of mules in the numerous herds of the patriarchs, and the late period at which they came into general use among the Jews, will not prove that Anah was not the inventor of that spurious breed, but only, that it was not in much request till the reign of David. That the procreation of mules was actually discouraged among the holy people, we have the highest authority for asserting. The God of Israel, who is a God of order and not of confusion, enacted a law, which he introduces with more than usual solemnity, not indeed to prohibit the use of mules when procreated, but to rear them: “Ye shall keep my statutes. Thou shalt not let thy cattle gender with a diverse kind*.” The mules which David and the nobles of his kingdom rode, were therefore, in all probability, imported from other countries where they abounded, long before the time of that illustrious monarch. In Cappadocia, in Greece, and the adjacent regions, the use of mules was much more ancient than among the Jews; for that animal is frequently and familiarly mentioned in the most ancient Grecian fables. In Homer too, the pestilence sent by Apollo, seized first on the mules and the dogs belonging to the Grecian camp.

Ουρῆας μὲν πρῶτον ἐπῶχετο καὶ κυνὰς ἀγρῆς.

Iliad.

The chariot of Priam was drawn by mules; and mules conveyed to the Grecian camp, the materials for the funeral pile of Patroclus; which, in the opinion of Bochart, happened long before the times in which David flourished, when the sacred writers began to mark the services of that animal. It is extremely probable, that the mule obtained admission into the

* Lev. xix. 19.

Holy land, some considerable time before the reign of David ; for in one of his Psalms, he classes it with the horse, and speaks of it in a manner which shews, that the temper and habits of the animal were quite familiar to the people of Israel : “ Be ye not as the horse or as the mule, which have no understanding ; whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee *.”

Bochart offers another interpretation, which he thinks in every respect entitled to the preference ; that the original term which our translators render mules, is in reality the name of a people, probably the same as the gigantic Emim, mentioned in the fourteenth chapter of Genesis. The Samaritan Pentateuch, accordingly reads here, (האִמִּים) the Emim ; and the Targum in Genesis, renders the term by (גִּבּוֹרִים) giants ; and Aquila and Symmachus retain the Hebrew name, Emim ; so, that the passage should be rendered : This is that Anah who found, or lighted upon, the Emim in the desert. The verb (מָצָא) matsa, when spoken of enemies, is used for lighting upon them, or even attacking them suddenly ; several examples of which, are quoted by Parkhurst. Thus, Anah is said to have found the Emim, or to have fallen upon them, or attacked them suddenly. By this daring exploit, which was greatly celebrated at the time it happened, whether he discomfited these gigantic enemies by his valour, or eluded the snare they had prepared for him by his address, he transmitted his fame to succeeding generations ; and by this criterion, the historian distinguishes him from others of the same name. But this interpretation is liable to several objections of considerable weight. In the first place, if such an event as Bochart supposes, ever happened, it had evidently sunk into oblivion or insignificance, long before the time of Moses ; and therefore, the obscure hint in the text, could scarcely serve the purpose of distinguishing him from another. Or, if this chieftain of mount Hor, had rendered his name illustrious by defeating the Emims, why does Moses

* Psalm xxxii. 9.

advert to it in such obscure terms ; while in the same chapter, in speaking of a military achievement, he uses the following clear and precise words : “ And Husham died, and Hadad, the son of Bedad, who smote Midian in the field of Moab, reigned in his stead.” No good reason can be given for such a difference of language, if similar events are intended. In the second place, it was no remarkable thing that a duke of the Horites, in tending his herds, should, in those licentious times, fall upon a hostile band of freebooters, and put them to the rout ; yet, Moses speaks of it as a most singular occurrence, using a most emphatical form of speech, (הוא ענה) He, Anah. The same phraseology occurs in two other passages of Scripture, in both of which our attention is drawn to two persons of no common rank and character. The first of these is Ahaz, of whom the inspired writer emphatically says, This is that king Ahaz ; or more literally, “ He, king Ahaz, who made Judah naked, and transgressed sore against the Lord*.” The second is Pharaoh king of Egypt, whose destruction the prophet describes in the same emphatical manner : “ He, Pharaoh, and all his multitude, saith the Lord God†.” But can any good reason be given, why the inspired writer speaks of an obscure duke of the Horites, who kept his father’s asses, and of an action so enveloped in darkness, that it is impossible to ascertain its real character in the same energetic terms, as of the flagrant wickedness of Ahaz, the king of Judah, and the fall of Pharaoh, the most powerful monarch of his time. Admitting the interpretation of Bochart, the Jewish legislator can scarcely be vindicated in the use of such a phrase ; but if Anah, contrary to the will of his Creator, clearly inscribed on his works, contrived a method of producing a new and spurious breed of animals, the Spirit of inspiration had the same reason to fix a mark of infamy on his name, as long afterwards on that of Ahaz, the profligate ruler of his chosen people.

The mule was employed by the ancients in many servile of-

* 2 Chron. xxviii. 19, 22.

† Ezek. xxxi. 18

fices. Remarkably sure footed, patient, and steady, he had the honour of being received at an early period into the service of kings and princes, and selected to carry them when they appeared on the most important occasions. David, the greatest monarch of his age, rode a mule, which was kept for his own use, and which Solomon mounted by his order, when he went down to Gihon to be invested with the royal dignity *. The rest of his sons rode the same animal †; and Absalom sat on a mule, when, in the wood of Ephraim, he went under the boughs of a great oak, and was caught by the hair of his head among the branches. Mules were reckoned a present not unworthy of the greatest monarchs; horses and mules were among the gifts which Solomon received from those who came to hear his wisdom ‡. Mules were employed by the people of Israel, in carrying provisions to David and his followers; they bore the warrior to the field, or drew the chariot from which he fought. The costly presents with which Priam redeemed the body of his beloved Hector, were carried in a chariot drawn by mules; “a splendid present which the Mysians had formerly presented to the aged monarch §.” Mules were also yoked in the plough in the time of Homer.

——— ἀί γὰρ τε βῶων προφρεσέεσθαι εἰσιν

ἐλκεμεναι νεοιο βαθείης πηκτον αροτρον.

Il. b. 10. l. 352.

With the patience and perseverance of the ass, the mule inherits the swiftness of the horse; and in Greece he was often permitted, as we learn from Pindar, to contend for the prize in the chariot race.

——— Ἀνα δ' ἡμιονοῖς,

Ξεῖλ' ἀπηνά, προστροπαδαν Πελίας;

Ἰκετο σπευδών ———

“Pelias came briskly, pressing forward in a chariot drawn by mules.”

Pollux confirms the testimony of the bard, that mules were

* 1 Kings i. 33.

† 2 Sam. xiii. 29.

‡ 1 Kings x. 25.

§ Iliad b. 24. l. 277.

formerly yoked in the chariot, and contended in the race at the Olympic games; and Pausanias mentions the names of many candidates who gained the prize in the (*απηνη*, or) chariot drawn by mules. The same animals were used in the chariot race by the Romans, and were much esteemed for their agility and swiftness. Pliny asserts, that a mule generated between a horse and female ass, is unconquerably stubborn and slow; but a mule from an ass and a mare, possesses the characteristic swiftness of his mother; and Ælian affirms, that the latter excels in speed, and is admirably fitted for the course. These unexceptionable testimonies, unfold the true reason that Mordecai and Esther sent their dispatches, which required the utmost haste, through all the provinces of the Persian empire, “by posts on horseback, and riders on mules, camels, and young dromedaries*.” Hence it appears, that one species of mules in the oriental regions, does not yield to the swiftest animals which man has been able to reduce under his dominion. The numerous useful qualities of the mule, have in some measure atoned for the baseness of his origin, and the irregularity which he has introduced among the lower animals; and have recommended him in every age, to the care and attention of his master. In the long and severe drought with which it pleased Jehovah, at the prayer of Elisha, to punish Ahab the king of Israel, and his idolatrous people, it was the first concern of that wicked monarch, to “save the horses and mules alive;” and so deep was the interest he took in their preservation, that he divided the country between himself and Obadiah, “to pass through it: Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah another way by himself†,” in quest of water and pasture, in the faint hope of saving these valuable animals from the impending destruction.

* Esth. viii. 10.

† 1 Kings xviii. 5, 6.

CHAP. VII.

TAME ANIMALS CONTINUED.

The Ox.

THE OX, by which the natural historian means black cattle in general, without regard to sex, is one of the most precious and useful to man, among the herbivorous animals. Easily tamed, and of a gentle and placid temper, he is maintained at small expense; and while he consumes but little, he enriches and improves the ground from which he draws his subsistence. He patiently lends his neck to the yoke, and exerts his great muscular strength in bearing our burdens, in preparing our fields for the seed, and, to this day in eastern regions, in separating the chaff from the grain, after he has assisted in gathering in the harvest. The milk of the herd supplies us with a rich and pleasant beverage; the flesh with a nutritious food; the skin forms a part of our covering, and in many parts of the world, still contributes to the defence of warriors in the day of battle. Scarcely a part of this animal indeed can be named, which is not daily rendered subservient to the purposes of utility or elegance. In the patriarchal ages, the ox constituted no inconsiderable portion of their wealth; and he is still the basis of the riches of nations, which in general flourish only in proportion to the cultivation of their territories, and the number of their cattle. In these, all real wealth consists; for silver and gold are only representations of riches, possessing in themselves little intrinsic value. These remarks are verified, by the notice which the sacred writers take of the ox, when they describe the wealth of primordial generations: "Abraham," say they, "was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold." "The Lord has blessed my master greatly," said the steward

of Abraham's house, "and he is become great; and he has given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and men-servants, and maid-servants, and camels, and asses*." Similar language is used in relation to the riches of Jacob: "The man increased exceedingly, and had much cattle, and maid-servants, and men-servants, and camels, and asses†." Another instance only shall be given from the book of Job: "His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she-asses, and a very great household; so that the man was the greatest of all the men in the east‡." So highly valued was this animal, that it was not thought too mean a present for a king to make in ancient times to his ally; for Moses informs us, that "Abimelech took sheep, and oxen, and men-servants, and women-servants, and gave them to Abraham§." Soon after, these eminent personages entered into a treaty with each other, and, on that occasion, Abraham "took sheep, and oxen, and gave them to Abimelech."

The ox, especially when fattened, is of a rounder form than any other domestic animal; a circumstance which has given him a name in the Hebrew text. The beauty of his shape has been celebrated in the lines of heathen poets, and acknowledged in the dictates of inspiration. In the prophecies of Jeremiah, the kingdom of Egypt is compared to "a very fair heifer||;" and the same allusion is involved in these words of Hosea: "And Ephraim is as an heifer that is taught, and loveth to tread out the corn; but I passed over upon her fair neck¶." The beauty of the heifer has been sung by the prince of Italian poets:

"Pascitur in magnis sylvis formosa juvenca." 3 *Geor. l.* 219.
And by Ovid,

"Victima labe carens et præstantissima forma." *Met. b.* 15.
An air of grandeur and majesty has been remarked in the

* Gen. xxiv. 35.

† Ch. xxx. 43.

‡ Job. i. 3.

§ Gen. xx. 14.

|| Jer. xlvi. 20.

¶ Hos. x. 11.

motions and attitudes of the bull, and a certain generosity in his aspect, which the Latin bard celebrates in these terms:

———“*torvæque decorus*

Frontis honos.”

Homer had long before sung the praise of bovine excellence :

Ηυτε βας ἀγέληφι μέγ' ἐξοχος ἐπλετο πάντων

Ταυρος: ὁ γὰρ τε βοῶσαι μεταπρέπει ἀγρομένησι. 2 *Il. l.* 480.

These high authorities justify the figure which Moses employs, in the blessing which he pronounces on the tribe of Joseph : “ His glory is like the firstling of his bullock ;” the generosity of his heart, and the majesty of his presence, were conspicuous in the amiable and dignified father of that tribe, the preserver of his family, and an eminent type of our gracious Redeemer.

The playful disposition of a young ox, the son of the herd, as the Hebrews beautifully call him, has been remarked by writers of every age.

——— ἐπὶ τὴν ἑσπέρην κορβανταί

Πασαί αἶμα σκαιῶσιν ἐναντία.

Odyss.

Their wanton gambols on the soft grass, is thus described by Theocritus :

Ὀρχευντ' ἐν μαλακῇ ται πόρρις αὐλικά ποια.

It is therefore with strict propriety, the Hebrew bard compares the shaking of the earth, and the reeling of the mountains with all their forests, when Jehovah descended in terrible majesty, to deliver the law from the top of Sinai, to the friskings of a young calf: “ He maketh them also to skip like a calf: Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn*.” The prophet Jeremiah is supposed, by ancient interpreters, to refer to the same circumstance, where he foretells the ruin of Babylon: “ Because ye were glad, because ye rejoiced, O ye destroyers of mine heritage; because ye are grown fat,” or sport, “ as the heifer at grass, and bellow as bulls.” A similar allusion is made by Malachi, when he describes the glorious appearance of the promised Messiah, and the joy of his people: “ But unto you that fear

* Psalm xxix. 6.

my name, shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth and grow up, or gambol, as calves of the stall*.”

The strength of the bull is too remarkable to require description; and his courage and fierceness are so great, that he ventures at times to combat the lion himself. Nor is he more celebrated for these qualities, than for his disposition to unite with those of his own kind against their common enemy. For these reasons, he has been chosen by the Spirit of inspiration, to symbolize the powerful, fierce, and implacable enemies of our blessed Redeemer; who, forgetting their personal animosities, combined against his precious life, and succeeded in procuring his crucifixion: “Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me around†.” Nor can we conceive a more striking and appropriate symbol of a fierce and ruthless warrior; an instance of which occurs in that supplication of David: “Rebuke the company of the spearmen, the multitude of the bulls, with the calves of the people, till every one submit himself with pieces of silver‡.” In the sublime description of Isaiah, which seems to refer to some great revolutions, which are to be effected in times long posterior to the age in which he flourished; probably in these last days, antecedent to the millennial state of the church; the complete destruction of her strong and cruel enemies is thus foretold: “And the unicorns shall come down with them, and the bullocks with the bulls, and their land shall be soaked with blood, and their dust made fat with fatness§.”

The ox is a heavy and sluggish animal, blunt in his feelings, and almost destitute of sagacity; yet he may be subdued to the yoke, taught to recognize his master, and to persevere with patient industry in his service. It is therefore, with peculiar force and beauty, the prophet contrasts his character and actions, with the dispositions and behaviour of Israel; who, although taught by God more than the beasts of the field, had, by yield-

* Mal. iv. 2.

† Psa. xxii. 12.

‡ Psa. lxxviii. 31.

§ Isa. xxxiv. 7.

ing to their vicious propensities, become more brutish than the dullest and most stupid of the lower animals: "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people do not consider*."

In the rutting season, the bull, naturally bold and untractable, becomes quite ungovernable, and often furious, especially when it is attempted to subject him to restraint. It is, therefore, with peculiar energy, that the prophet represents the sons of Zion in the days of their calamity, as lying at the head of all the streets, like a wild bull in a net: raging and struggling to break their toils, but entangling themselves still the more, and rendering their condition worse, by their own violent passions, and useless exertions.

The ox, like all the lower animals, is neither tormented by reflecting on the past, nor guessing at the future; he grazes without fear or doubt, amidst the green pastures, and fattens for the knife, unconscious of the doom that awaits him: and when his owner comes and leads him away to the slaughter, his brute imagination only figures a richer meadow, or a more agreeable companion. Equally unconscious and cheerful is the miserable youth, whom an abandoned woman has entangled in her toils, and leads away to forbidden pleasures. He is not aware of his danger, and his misery: he goes with blind infatuation, and pitiable mirth to his destruction: "He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks†."

The prevailing colour among the herds in the east is red. This fact is attested by Pindar in these lines:

Μηλα τεγαρε τοι εγω

Και βοων ξανθας αγελας αφημι.

Pyth. 4.

"I leave thee, flocks and red herds of oxen." And when he offered a hecatomb to Neptune, a red herd of Thracian bulls was the present:

Φοινισσα δε Θρηκικων αγελα ταυρων

Υπαρχεν.

* Isa i. 3.

† Prov. vii. 22.

Under the law, Jehovah commanded a red heifer to be offered as a kind of sin offering, to purify from certain legal defilements. The animal was killed, and then burnt without the camp, (as the sin offering was upon the great day of atonement), and the blood sprinkled seven times directly before the tabernacle, although it was not shed at the altar. The law of Moses only required, that the heifer should be red, and young, without spot and blemish; and which had never been subjected to the yoke. To these plain instructions, the Jews added an infinite number of niceties and exceptions, in choosing a heifer, for this offering. If she was not perfectly red, without the mixture of any other colour; if she had but two hairs black or white,—she was reckoned unfit for the purpose.

Why the law demands a young cow rather than a bullock, (which was commonly preferred by the divine legislator,) and why one perfectly red, it is not easy to determine. It is the opinion of some learned men, that this precept was given to preserve the people of Israel from the religion of the Egyptians, who honoured the cow as an animal sacred to Isis; and by consequence, abhorred the thought of presenting her at the altar. For this reason, it is supposed, Jehovah commanded a cow to be burnt, rather than a bullock; and one perfectly red, because that colour was held in great abhorrence by the Egyptians, who fancied that Typhon, in their superstition the source of all evil, was of this colour, and therefore they offered him red oxen in sacrifice. But it is doubtful, whether those superstitions, recorded by Plutarch and Herodotus, existed in the days of Moses; and still more, that the divine lawgiver, if he had any respect to the Egyptian rites, would have appointed so great a number of sacrifices, without any regard to colour, and mentioned it only in this instance, which was not a proper sacrifice. Lewis, and other writers imagine, that the difficulty of finding a red cow, without the least intermixture of any other hair, was the reason of the appointment. But it is not easy to conceive, why God, in this instance, had respect chiefly

to the great difficulty of procuring a heifer of the required colour. In all his other appointments, the gracious lawgiver seems to have consulted the ease and convenience of his people, by requiring them to offer in his service what was at hand, and what they could easily afford. The difficulty of finding a heifer perfectly red, cannot then be admitted as the true reason of that appointment: nor has any satisfactory account been given, why the heifer was preferred on this occasion to the bullock. Some pious expositors consider the heifer as a type of our blessed Redeemer: its unblemished perfection, represented his immaculate purity, and sinless excellence; its red colour, indicated the relation of Christ to our family, descended from Adam, that is, a man formed of red earth: the shedding of his own blood for the sins of his people, and the complete victory which he has gained over all their enemies, whose blood he has sprinkled upon his vesture; its freedom from the yoke, his voluntary, his unrestrained devoting of himself to the work of redemption. No doubt can be reasonably entertained, that the burning of the red heifer did prefigure the sufferings and death of Christ; and the purifying efficacy of her collected ashes, mixed in water, the cleansing energy of his blood; for it is the blood of Christ alone that cleanseth from all sin.

The grass of the field, and the young shoots and leaves of the forest, supply the ox with food, which he collects by a peculiar action of his tongue, and devours in large quantities, with great rapidity. The first circumstance is mentioned by the Psalmist as an additional aggravation in the grovelling idolatry of Israel: "They changed their glory unto the similitude of an ox, that eateth grass*." Disregarding the dictates of reason, which had been planted in their bosoms by the inspiration of God, they exchanged the glorious manifestations or symbols of the divine presence, with which they were still favoured, into the form of an ox, which their Egyptian oppressors had exalted to the rank of a god, and absurdly worshipped;

* Ps. cvi. 20.

a stupid and irrational animal, doomed by his Maker to fix his brute countenance on the ground, to which both his soul and body return, and to subsist on the coarsest fare.

“To eat grass like an ox*,” was a part of that signal punishment which the most High inflicted upon the proud and tyrannical king of Babylon. Deprived of reason, which he had so greatly abused, and resigned to the full influence of bestial appetites, he was hurled from his throne and dignity, and expelled from the society of mankind, to roam naked in the open fields, exposed, like the herd with which he associated, to all the inclemencies of the heavens, and forced like them to feed on grass; a dreadful lesson to the oppressors of every succeeding age. To the second circumstance, or the manner in which the ox collects his food, the quantity which he devours, and the rapidity with which he eats down the pasture, the king of Moab alludes in his address to the elders of Midian, on the dangers to which their country was exposed from the dreaded invasion of the Israelitish armies: “And Moab said unto the elders of Midian, Now shall this company lick up all that are round about us, as the ox licketh up the grass of the field †.”

Under the special care of oriental husbandmen, the ox, in seasons of plenty, was regaled with a mixture of chaff, chopped straw, and various kinds of grain, carefully winnowed and moistened with subacid water. Such is the meaning of that prediction: “The oxen likewise and the young asses, that ear the ground, shall eat clean (or subacid) provender, which hath been winnowed with the shovel and with the fan ‡.” When the Lord returns to bless his repenting people, so rich and abundant shall be the produce of their fields, that the lower animals which toil in the service of man, and have assigned for their subsistence the very refuse of the harvest, shall share in the general plenty, and feed on provender, carefully separated from all offensive matters, and adapted to their taste. But, among the Jews, this animal fed most luxuriously when employed in tread-

* Dan. iv. 29.

† Num. xxii. 4.

‡ Isa. xxx. 24.

ing out the corn; for the divine law, in many of whose precepts the benevolence of Deity conspicuously shines, forbade to muzzle him, and by consequence, to prevent him from eating even to satiety of the grain which he was employed to separate from the husk. This allusion is involved in the prophet's address to the ten tribes, in which he warns them, that the abundance and tranquillity which they had so long enjoyed, should not exempt them from the punishments due to their multiplied crimes. Despising the frugal and laborious life of their ancestors, they had become slothful and voluptuous, like an ox that declines to bend his neck any longer to the yoke, and loves the easier employment of treading out the corn, where he riots without restraint in the accumulated bounties of Heaven: "Ephraim is as an heifer that is taught, (or has become nice and delicate,) and loveth to tread out the corn; but I passed over upon her fair neck*."

Men of every age and country, have been much indebted to the labours of this animal; he was the first that resigned his neck to the plough, that extended the prospects, and multiplied or enlarged the comforts of the rising nations. So early as the days of Job, who was probably the contemporary of Isaac, "the oxen were ploughing, and the asses feeding beside them," when the Sabeans fell upon them and took them away†. In times long posterior, when Elijah was commissioned to anoint Elisha, the son of Shaphat, prophet in his stead, he found him ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen‡. For many ages, the hopes of oriental husbandmen depended entirely on their labours; this was so much the case in the time of Solomon, that he observes in one of his proverbs, "Where no oxen are, the crib is clean, or rather empty; but much increase is by the strength of the ox§." The ass, in the course of ages, was compelled to bend his stubborn neck to the yoke, and share in his labours; but still, the preparation of the ground in the time of spring, chiefly depended on the more powerful exer-

* Hos. x. 11.

† Job i. 14.

‡ 1 Kings xix. 19.

§ Prov. xiv. 4.

tions of the latter. This may be fairly inferred from the text, in which a preference, as might be expected, is given to the ox: "The oxen likewise and the young asses, that ear (or till) the ground, shall eat clean provender." The same inference may be drawn from the proverb of Solomon already quoted, in which he takes no notice of the ass, although it is more than probable, he had been yoked in the plough long before his reign. The superior importance of the ox, even in the light and sandy fields of Syria, is clearly signified in these words of Amos: "Shall horses run upon the rock; will one plough there with oxen *."

In ancient Greece, the ox was engaged in the same labours, for Homer compares the two sons of Ajax to two black oxen, that with equal spirit, drag the compact plough in the fallow, while a profuse sweat issues from the bottom of their horns.

Αλλ' ὡς ἐν νεῖῳ βοε οἰνοπέ πηχλον ἀροτρον

Ἴσον θυμον ἔχοντε τιταίνετον.

Il. b. 13. l. 703.

The Greek writers are eager to secure the honour of taming the ox, and yoking him in the plough, to their own nation; but they ascribe the work to so many gods and goddesses, heroes and great men, that it is evident, the benefactor must be sought for among a different people, and in a remoter age. The laws of Moses, which prohibited his people to join in the same yoke the ox and the ass, and the notice which the afflicted patriarch Job, who flourished long before his time, gives us of the "oxen ploughing," clearly prove, that the person who invented the plough and instructed the ox, existed long before the founders of the Grecian states. We may, with the page of inspiration for our guide, trace the invention to the first descendants of our common father, one of whom was a shepherd, and the other a cultivator of the soil. Nor is the believer in Revelation permitted to assign the honour chiefly to them; he is directed to ascribe it to the Spirit of the only wise God; "Give ye ear and hear my voice; hearken and hear my speech. Doth the ploughman plough all day to sow? doth

* Hos. vi. 22.

he open and break the clods of his ground? When he hath made plain the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the fitches and scatter the cummin, and cast in the principal wheat, and the appointed barley, and the rye in their place? For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him*.” By direct revelation from Heaven, or the secret suggestion of his Spirit to the mind of Adam, or his son Cain, they were taught to construct the plough, and bend the pliant neck of the ox to the yoke. The importance of the lesson, confirmed by their own daily experience, they failed not to impress upon the minds of their offspring; and thus, one generation transmitted to another, the valuable favour.

The ox was also compelled to submit, when the seed time was over, to the more severe labour of dragging the cart or the waggon. In the book of Numbers, the princes of Israel brought their offering before the Lord, six covered waggons and twelve oxen; that is, six waggons each drawn by two oxen; and in the same chapter, Moses “gave two waggons and four oxen unto the sons of Gershon, according to their service; and four waggons and eight oxen unto the sons of Merari, according to their service;” that is, every waggon drawn by two oxen †. The number of oxen commonly yoked in one cart, seems to have been two; for the priests and diviners, whom the lords of the Philistines consulted about the captive ark of Jehovah, advised them to make a new cart, and yoke in it two milch kine, for the purpose of carrying back the dread symbol of divine majesty to the place appointed for its reception ‡. The new cart, in which the king of Israel and his people brought it up from the house of Abinadab, seems also to have been drawn by two oxen, although the number is not so clearly stated §.

It appears from Homer, that oxen and mules were the most common draught cattle in ancient Greece and the Lesser Asia; for the wood which formed the funeral pile of Hector, was conveyed in waggons drawn by oxen and mules :

* Is. xxviii. 23, 24, 25.

† Numb. vii. 3, 7, 8.

‡ 1 Sam. vi. 7.

§ 2 Sam. vi. 3, 6.

οἱ δὲ πᾶσι ἀμαρτύνειν βοῶς ἡμίονος τε
 Σ ευγυνόσαν.

Il. b. 24. l. 782.

The Roman poets speak of the practice in a manner which shews that it was common over all Italy. Thus Ovid:

“ Ipsa sedens plaustro porta est invecta Capena
 Sparguntur juncta flore recente boves.”

B. 4. Fast. v. 343.

According to Tibullus, those that first yoked the ox in the draught, were Bacchus and Ceres:

“ Illi etiam tauros primi docuisse feruntur
 Servitium et plaustro supposuisse rotam.”

B. 2. Eleg. 1.

From the oriental regions, the custom quickly found its way into the remotest countries of the north. The Scythians, from time immemorial, have wandered over their unmeasured steppes in waggons drawn by oxen, and the ancient Sarmatians imitated their example:

“ Ducunt Sarmatici barbara plaustra boves. *Ovid.*” *Trist.*

This strong and docile animal, was also taught to submit his shoulder to the heavy burden; for, at the accession of David to the throne of Israel, the people brought “bread on asses and on camels, and on mules and on oxen*.” He is less fitted, indeed, by the rotundity of his form, for this species of labour, than for those just mentioned, a circumstance stated by Cicero with his usual felicity: *Quid de bobus loquar, quorum ipsa terga declarant non esse se ad onus accipiendum figurata.* But although the very back of the ox, according to this elegant writer, declares that it has not been formed to receive a load, yet the concurring testimony of past ages, assures us that it is not altogether unfit for that purpose. Ælian, in the seventh book of his history, observes, that the bull submits to the bier, and carries a boy or a girl on his neck, and a woman on his back. The Roman authors mounted Bacchus on a bull, and made Europa travel in the same manner:

* 1 Chron. xii. 40.

“Vexerat European fraterna per equora taurus :

At nunc Aleidem taurus in astra tulit.”

These quotations prove, that it was by no means uncommon to use the ox for burdens of every kind, and even for the saddle ; a custom which Mr Bruce avers, is still practised among some African tribes.

The flesh of the herd was not only used by the chosen people, but also reckoned, when young, one of their greatest delicacies. The patriarch Abraham accordingly, with ardent hospitality, entertained the angels under the oak at Mamre with “a calf, tender and good * ;” and the pythoness, at Endor, could think of nothing so delicious and acceptable to set before Saul, as a calf fattened in treading out the corn†. Nor had the father, in the parable, a greater delicacy to set upon the festive board, when he received his returning prodigal, than the fatted calf‡. The young of the herd, were numbered among the blessings which Jehovah promised to bestow upon his ransomed people, and classed with the choicest viands: “Therefore, they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, for wheat and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd ; and their soul shall be as a watered garden ; and they shall not sorrow any more at all §.” The voluptuous nobles of Israel, in the days of Amos, lay upon beds of ivory, and stretched themselves upon their couches, and ate the lambs out of the flock, “and the calves out of the midst of the stall ||.” It is obviously the design of the indignant prophet to inform us, that the nobles and princes of his degenerate country, indulged, without restraint, in every sensual gratification which luxury could suggest, and riches procure.

In times of primeval simplicity, when mankind, in general, almost constantly engaged in hazardous pursuits, or toilsome occupations, required for their sustenance a very large quan-

* Gen. xviii. 7.

§ Jer. xxxi. 12.

† 1 Sam. xxviii. 24.

|| Am. vi. 4.

‡ Luke xv. 23.

tity of solid and nutritious food, the full grown ox himself was forced to contribute a principal part of every public entertainment. When Adonijah seized the sceptre of Israel, he “slew sheep and oxen and fat cattle; and called all his brethren, the king’s sons, and all the men of Israel, the king’s servants*.” the son of Shaphat made a feast equally substantial, when he was invested with the prophetic office†; abundance of “oxen and sheep” were provided for the great and splendid entertainment at the coronation of David‡; and when Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went down to visit Ahab the king of Israel at Samaria, the latter killed sheep and oxen for him in abundance, and for the people that were with him§.” This was the kind of feast in which they chiefly delighted; from which they could be deterred neither by the denunciations of divine judgement, nor the terrors of immediate invasion: “And in that day did the Lord God of hosts call to weeping and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth; and behold, joy and gladness, slaying oxen and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine||.” The same custom seems to have continued to the very close of their national state; for, in the parable of the marriage-feast, the invitation runs: “Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready; come unto the marriage¶.” In the feasts of Homer, we discover the same substantial preparations; in every entertainment, the fatted ox is the principal article, and not unfrequently, the sole dish at table. This remarkable coincidence in the customs of two nations so distant from each other, proves its general prevalence among the people of the east.

Many of them, however, like the modern Hindoos, abstained entirely from the use of flesh. The Egyptians and Phenicians, we are assured by Porphyry, would rather have devoured a human victim, than tasted the flesh of an ox. The Cyre-

* 1 Kings i. 9.

† Chap. xix. 21.

‡ 1 Chron. xii. 40.

§ 2 Chron. xviii. 2.

|| Isa. xxii. 13.

¶ Matth. xxii. 4

nian and African shepherds, if the testimony of Herodotus is entitled to credit, refused to shed the blood of an ox, or to eat his flesh; and, according to Ælian, if a Phrygian killed an ox which had been yoked in the plough, he was punished with death. The same law formerly existed in Greece. The ox, says Varro, is the companion of men in the labours of the field, and the minister of Ceres; the ancients, therefore, felt so great an interest in his preservation, that they inflicted capital punishment on his destroyer. The poets of Greece and Rome contend, that in the golden and silver ages, when mankind lived agreeably to nature, in simplicity and innocence, they refused to stain their hands with a bullock's blood; and that this nefarious practice entered with the brazen, or, according to some, with the iron age, when degenerate man, become cruel and voracious, gave way to every vicious propensity.

“Ante etiam sceptrum Dictæi regis et ante

Impia quam cæsis gens est epulata juvenis.”

2 *Geor.* l. 536.

But so inconsistent are the conduct and sentiments of these renowned heathens, that while, like the Hindoos of modern times, they shuddered at the thought of spilling the blood or tasting the flesh of a bullock, like them too, they reckoned it no crime in most cases, to shed the blood of a fellow creature; they felt no reluctance to sacrifice the life of a neighbour in private revenge, or in public sacrifice, nor to light up the flames of war, and riot in the carnage of battle. But to these mawkish refinements of heathen sages and poets, we have to oppose the example of Abraham, Elisha, Josiah, and a multitude of others, equally venerable for their wisdom and their holiness. But what is infinitely more, we have to oppose the express grant of Jehovah himself, who made, and who graciously takes care of oxen: “Every moving thing,” said he to Noah, “shall be meat for you; even as the green herb, have I given you all things*.” This grant was long afterwards con-

* Gen. ix. 3.

firmed to Israel in the wilderness in these terms: "These are the beasts which ye shall eat; the ox, the sheep, and the goat *." The products of the dairy are scarcely less valuable; but these are so well known, and the texts of Scripture which allude to them so perspicuous, as to render any remarks upon them unnecessary.

The Sheep.

The Syrian sheep are of two kinds; the Bedouin, which differs in no respect from the larger kind of sheep in Britain, except that their tails are somewhat longer and thicker; the other is a kind often mentioned by travellers, on account of their extraordinary tails, which are very broad and large, terminating in a small appendix, which turns back upon them. These tails are of a substance between fat and marrow, and are not eaten separately, but mixed with the lean meat in many of the Syrian dishes; they are also frequently used instead of butter. A common sheep of this kind (without the head, feet, skin, and entrails), weighs sixty or seventy English pounds, of which the tail usually weighs fifteen pounds and upwards †. This species is far the most numerous, both in Syria and in Palestine, and was probably the kind which bled on the Jewish altars. The extraordinary size and deliciousness of their tails give additional importance to the law in which Moses commands, that when a sacrifice of peace offerings should be made by fire unto the Lord, the fat which was reserved as sacred to God, and particularly the whole rump or tail taken off hard by the back bone, should be burnt upon the altar ‡. To command, by an express law, the tail of a British sheep to be offered in sacrifice to God, might well surprise us; but the wonder ceases when we are told of those broad tailed eastern sheep, and the extreme delicacy of that part which was so particularly specified in the statute §.

In a wild state, or when suffered to rove undisturbed in ex-

* Deut. xiv. 4.

† Russel's Hist. of Aleppo.

‡ Lev. iii. 9.

§ Harm. vol. iii, 329.

tensive pastures, the sheep is a robust and active animal, and capable of enduring, without injury, great fatigue. His talents, it must be admitted, are not so brilliant as those of some other quadrupeds; but he does not appear to be that stupid, defenceless, timid creature, which Buffon represents him in his elaborate pages. It has been justly observed, that all tame animals lose a portion of that sagacity, dexterity, and courage, which they are obliged to exert against their enemies in a wild state, because they have long been accustomed to rely upon the protection of man. Sheep, when enslaved by men, tremble at the voice of the shepherd or his dog. But on those extensive mountains, where they are allowed to range almost without control, and where they seldom depend on the shepherd's aid, they display a very different character: animated by a spirit of liberty and independence, a ram, or a wether, in this situation, boldly attacks a single dog, and often comes off victorious. But when the danger is more alarming, like a warlike animal of a higher order, they trust not to the prowess of individuals, but have recourse to the collected strength and energy of the whole flock. On such occasions, they draw up into one compact body; they place the young and the females in the centre; and the strongest males take the foremost ranks, keeping close by the side of one another. Thus an armed front is presented on all quarters, and in this manner they wait with firmness and intrepidity the approach of the foe. Nor does their courage fail them in the moment of attack; for if the aggressor advance within a few yards of the line, the rams dart upon him with irresistible impetuosity, and either lay him dead at their feet, or put him to instant flight. Against the attacks of single dogs or foxes, they are, in this situation, perfectly secure. A ram, regardless of danger, often engages a bull, and seldom fails to conquer him; for the bull, by lowering his head, without being sensible of his defenceless condition, receives between his horns the stroke of his adversary, which commonly brings him to the ground.

The ram, therefore, is not so contemptible an enemy as inaccurate observers are apt to suppose. The account of his sagacity, firmness, and courage in the hour of danger, which has been now given, entirely justifies the inspired writers in comparing the rich and the powerful to the rams of the flock. When the prophet Ezekiel says in the name of the Lord: "Behold, I judge between cattle and cattle, between the rams and the he-goats," he intimates that the great men, by extortion and oppression, impoverished their neighbours, left them almost without subsistence, and were so vexatious to them, that they could not enjoy, with satisfaction, the little they were suffered to retain. Their oppressors were strong, and courageous, and impetuous, as the rams before the flock in the hour of danger; but it was not for the defence of the weak and helpless, but for their own aggrandizement, and the gratification of their own low and vicious propensities. The prophet alludes to the flock, in his figurative description of the vengeance which Jehovah threatened to execute on the enemies of his church: "The sword of the Lord is filled with blood; it is made fat with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams; for the Lord hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea*." The lambs and the goats, or the great body of the people, and the rams, by which the prophet means their princes and rulers, shall fall in the day of the Lord's anger, by one indiscriminate slaughter. "The great men and the mighty men, and the chief captains," shall become as easy a prey as the weakest and the most helpless of the community; "for who may abide the day of his coming; and who shall stand when he doth this?"

This animal, although generally simple and harmless, becomes, in a rich pasture, so petulant, as to occasion considerable inconvenience, and even danger, to man and some other creatures. The ram, in particular, loves to strike with his

* Isa. xxxiv. 6.

horn; and many are the warnings in the strains of Grecian and Roman poets to beware of his attack. The vision of the ram, therefore, in the book of Daniel, perfectly accords with the character of that animal, which is no mean emblem of a warlike state. The prophet begins with a description of his form and position: "Then I lifted up mine eyes and saw, and behold there stood before the river a ram which had two horns, and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last." The strength, activity, and courage of the ram are then brought within our view: "I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward: so that no beasts might stand before him: neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will and became great*." The two horns were the kingdoms of Media and Persia; of which the latter, although of more recent date, was by far the most powerful and celebrated. The symbolical ram was seen pushing westward, in the direction of Babylon, Syria, and Greece; northward, in the direction of the Lydians, Armenians, and Scythians; and southwards, in the direction of Arabia, Ethiopia, and Egypt. On all these nations did the Persian empire at one time or other direct the force of her arms; and at last she became so great and powerful, that no nation was able to resist her numerous and well appointed armies. Her victorious banners floated on the banks of the Indus and the Nile, and more than once carried desolation and dismay into the heart of Greece itself. The kings of Persia "did according to their will;" they prospered in all their undertakings, and abroad and at home governed their prostrate subjects with absolute authority. None could escape the grasp of their power; none could save from destruction the victim of their displeasure. The extent of their dominions, the number of their subjects, the riches of their treasury, and the splendour of their court, had seldom been equalled; certainly never surpassed.

* Isa. viii. 3, 4.

But, like every thing human, this mighty empire completed the term of its duration, and passed away. Bending under its own weight, and enervated by luxury, it fell an easy prey to the king of Macedon, who is represented in the next verse by the he-goat, than which a more appropriate emblem is not to be found in the kingdom of nature. “The goat is superior to the sheep both in sentiment and dexterity; he is stronger, lighter, and more agile than the ram; he is sprightly, capricious, and given to wander; and it is with difficulty he can be confined to a flock. He loves to retire into solitude, to climb steep and rugged places, to stand, even to sleep, on the points of rocks, and the edges of the most frightful precipices. He is robust, and easily nourished; for he eats almost every herb, and is injured by a very inconsiderable number. Though he seems to feel the effects of severe cold, he is not afraid of rain, or storms, or too great a degree of heat; he cheerfully exposes himself to the sun, and without inconvenience sleeps under its most ardent rays. But he is inconstant in his passions, and irregular in his actions. He walks, stops short, runs, leaps, approaches, retires, shews and conceals himself, or flies off as if he were actuated by mere caprice, and without any other cause than what arises from an eccentric vivacity of temper. The suppleness of his organs, and the strength and nervousness of his frame, are hardly sufficient to support the petulance and rapidity of his natural movements.” Such is the character of the he-goat, as delineated by the masterly hand of Buffon; and every one that recollects the history of the Macedonian hero, will at once see that it applies to his character and actions with admirable precision. It indicates with great justness the ardour, the activity, the patience, the fortitude, and the daring intrepidity of Alexander; the wild eccentricity of his temper, his delight in hazardous enterprize, and the amazing rapidity of his movements. The prophet goes on: “And as I was considering the character and actions of the ram, behold, an he-goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth,

and touched not the ground; and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes, and I saw him come close unto the ram; and he was moved with choler against him, and smote the ram, and brake his two horns, and there was no power in the ram to stand before him; but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him, and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand."

The surprising fecundity of the sheep has been celebrated by writers of every class. It has not escaped the notice of the royal Psalmist, who, in a beautiful ascription of praise to the living and the true God, entreats, that the sheep of his chosen people might "bring forth thousands and ten thousands in their streets*." In another song of Zion, he represents, by a very elegant metaphor, the numerous flocks, covering like a garment the face of the field: "The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing†." The bold figure is fully warranted by the prodigious numbers of sheep which whitened the extensive pastures of Syria and Canaan. In that part of Arabia which borders on Judea, the patriarch Job possessed at first seven thousand, and after the return of his prosperity, fourteen thousand sheep; and Mesha, the king of Moab, paid the king of Israel "a yearly tribute of an hundred thousand lambs, and an equal number of rams with the wool‡." In the war which the tribe of Reuben waged with the Hagarites, the former drove away "two hundred and fifty thousand sheep§." At the dedication of the temple, Solomon offered in sacrifice, "an hundred and twenty thousand sheep." At the feast of the passover, Josiah the king of Judah, "gave to the people, of the flock, lambs and kids, all for the passover offerings, for all that were present, to the number of thirty thousand, and three thousand bullocks; these were of the king's substance||." The ewe brings forth her young commonly once a year, and in more ungenial climes,

* Ps. cxliv. 13.

† Ps. lxxv. 13.

‡ 2 Kings iii. 4.

§ 1 Chron. v. 21.

|| 2 Chron. xxxv. 7.

seldom more than one lamb at a time. But in the oriental regions, twin lambs are as frequent as they are rare in other places; which accounts in a satisfactory manner, for the prodigious numbers which the Syrian shepherd led to the mountains.

“Quam dives pecoris nevei, quam lactis abundans.”

Vir. Ecl. 2. l. 21.

“How rich in snowy flocks, how abounding in milk.” This uncommon fruitfulness, seems to be intimated by Solomon in his address to the spouse: “Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which come up from the washing; whereof every one bear twins, and none is barren among them*.”

It ought not to be omitted, that the ewe has been known to bring forth twice in the year; and Homer affirms, that in Lybia she produces three times a year.

τρεις γὰρ τικτει μῆλα τελεσφόρον εἰς ἐνιαυτον.

Odys. b. 4.

But since the time of her gestation is five months, the assertion of that immortal bard cannot be true. Twin lambs appear to have been quite common in Italy, if credit may be given to Virgil.

“Bis gravidæ pecudes, bis pomis utilis arbor.”

2 Geor. l. 150.

The flocks which ranged the fertile pastures of Mesopotamia, seem also to have generally produced twins every year. Laban who lived in that country, is said to have changed the wages of Jacob ten times in the space of six years; but since the wages of Jacob consisted of the lambs and the kids, they could not have been changed more than six times in six years, if his flock had brought forth only once a year. Should it be thought that, according to this rule, the wages of Jacob must have been changed twelve times, let it be remembered, that the flocks of Laban had brought forth their first lambs before the bargain was concluded between him and Jacob, and by consequence, the latter had only the lambs of one yearling that

* Song, iv. 2.

year; and again, the flocks had yeaned only once in the last year of his abode with Laban, because he was compelled to leave the service of his envious relative, before the close of the season, and consequently, before the second yeaning. Thus the flocks yeaned only ten times from the date of their agreement, till the departure of Jacob to his own country. Or, we may consider the phrase "ten times," as a definite for an indefinite number; in which sense it is often used by the sacred writers. Thus, Jehovah complains of his ancient people whom he had brought out of Egypt, that they had tempted him "now these ten times," that is, many times, "and had not hearkened to his voice*." Job uses it in the same sense: "These ten times have ye reproached me," that is, ye have often reproached me†. In the same manner, when Jacob complained that Laban had changed his wages ten times, he might only mean that he had done so frequently. Had we therefore no stronger proof, that the sheep of Laban yeaned twice in the year, the fact might seem to rest merely on the state of the flocks in the adjacent regions, which it cannot be doubted, generally yeaned twins, and for the most part twice in the year. A stronger proof, therefore, may be drawn from these words: "And it came to pass, whensoever the stronger cattle did conceive, that Jacob laid the rods before the eyes of the cattle in the gutters, that they might conceive among the rods. But when the cattle were feeble, he put them not in; so the feebler were Laban's, and the stronger Jacob's‡." Two yearnings are supposed to be suggested in this passage, by the terms stronger and feebler; the lambs of the first were always stronger than those of the second; and consequently, they fell to Jacob by the special bounty of Heaven, causing the cattle, not by any law of nature, but by an act of Almighty power, to conceive among the rods, the use of which was merely the test of Jacob's faith in the divine promise. This is evident, by the sense in which the Syriac interpreter, and the Chaldee Para-

* Numb. xiv. 22.

† Job xix. 3.

‡ Gen. xxx. 41, 42.

phrast understood the text ; for, instead of the term “feebler,” they use the word “later,” rendering the clause, so the later were Laban’s. Jerome, Aquila, and other expositors, interpret the clause in the same manner. Kimchi, and other Jewish writers, often speak of the first and second yeannings ; referring the former to the month Nisan, which corresponds to our March ; and the latter to the month Tisri, which nearly corresponds to September ; and they assert, that the lambs of the first yeanning are called קשרים, keshorim, or bound, because they had a more compact body ; and those of the second, חסרים, Aetophim, or deficient, because they were feebler. The autumnal lambs, however, were preferred by many to the vernal, and the winter to the summer limbs *, as being more vigorous and healthy. But it must be confessed, that no certain trace of two yeannings in the year can be discovered in the sacred volume. The fact is attested by many common authors, and seems necessary to account for the rapid increase of oriental stock, and the prodigious numbers of which the Syrian flocks consisted. The words of Moses may refer, at least with equal probability, to the vigorous and healthy constitution of the ewes which Jacob selected for his purpose ; and signify, that robust mothers produced robust lambs, and feeble mothers a weak and spiritless offspring. Aware of the advantages of a vigorous and healthy stock, especially with a long and perilous journey before him, “ Jacob laid the rods before the eyes of the stronger ewes in the gutters, that they might conceive among the rods ; but when the cattle were feeble, he put them not in ; so the feebler were Laban’s, and the stronger Jacob’s.”

No animal is more gay and playful than the lamb. In a few days after its birth, which are spent in repose, it begins to discover the sportiveness of its disposition, in a variety of harmless and cheerful gambols. These have not escaped the notice even of inspired writers, but have furnished them with many

* Pliny b. 8. ch. 47.

beautiful and striking allusions. The trembling of the earth, and the reeling of the mountains, at the presence of Jehovah their creator, have been compared to the frisking of a lamb, in that sublime ode in which the royal Psalmist describes the majesty of God, and the corresponding fear of his people: "What ailed you, ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams; and ye little hills like lambs?" The holy Psalmist expressed in the presence of all Israel, the joy and exultation of his heart, when he brought home the ark, dancing before the Lord with all his might; or as the words may be rendered, leaping as a lamb.

The sheep naturally delights in a mountainous country. Theocritus observes, the sheep feed on the mountains:

— εν ουρεσι πολλὰ νομεισι.

And in Virgil, the shepherd sings:

"Mille meæ Siculis errant in montibus agnæ." *Ec. 2. l. 21.*

"A thousand ewes of mine wander on the Sicilian mountains."

To this characteristic inclination of the flock, the sacred writers have more than once alluded. Thus, when Moses tended the flocks of Jethro, his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, he "led them to the back side of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb*." The prophet, in a later age, compares the return of Israel from the land of their captivity, under the mighty protection of Jehovah, to the return of a flock, after long absence, to their native mountains: "As a shepherd seeketh out his flock, in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered, in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel, by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country†."

* Exod. iii. 1.

† Ezek. xxxiv. 12.

On any alarm, they forsake their pastures, and run together into one close compacted group :

Ἅι μὲν τ' ἀφίστηναι ἐπ' ἀλλήλησι κέχυνται. *Iliad* b. 5. l. 141.

To this circumstance, the prophet undoubtedly refers, when in the name of Jehovah, he warned his people of the time, when, terrified by the invasion of hostile armies, and the cruel devastation of their country, they should seek for safety in their cities, as the flocks of Bozrah in their fold, from the attack of the wolf or the lion ; “ I will surely assemble, O Jacob, all of thee ; I will surely gather the remnant of Israel : I will put them together as the sheep of Bozrah, as the flock in the midst of their fold : they shall make great noise, because of the multitude of men*.”

This useful and harmless animal is neither distinguished for its sagacity, its strength, nor its swiftness ; it is, therefore, exposed to the attacks of many enemies ; and when deserted by the keeper, no domestic animal is more helpless and wretched. To the misery of this destitute condition, the sacred writers frequently allude ; and among the Hebrews, it seems to have become a proverb. The passages in which the allusion occurs, are too numerous to be quoted ; the following instances may suffice : “ And he said, I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills as sheep that have not a shepherd†.” “ Therefore, they went their way as a flock : they were troubled because there was no shepherd‡.” “ Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered§.” “ But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd||.”

The sheep is a creature prone to wander from its accustomed pastures ; to separate itself, although a gregarious animal, from the flock, and ramble into distant and dangerous solitudes. The perils to which this erratic disposition exposes it, are greatly increased by the want of inclination or skill to return. To

* Mic. ii. 12.

† 1 Kings xxii. 17.

‡ Zech. x. 2.

§ Zech. xiii. 7.

|| Mat. ix. 36.

these defects, the Psalmist pointedly refers, in that well known confession : “ I have gone astray like a lost sheep ; seek thy servant*.” The prophet extends it to all mankind : “ All we like sheep have gone astray : we have turned every one to his own way ; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all†.” This is confirmed by the apostle : “ For ye were as sheep going astray : but are now returned unto the shepherd and bishop of your souls‡.” Such is the true character of all mankind ; prone to wander from God, their only proper rest, disinclined to return, without knowledge to discern, or wisdom to secure the true interests of their immortal souls, till in the day of power the mind is illumined from above.

The Goat.

Two kinds of goats wander in the pastures of Syria and Canaan ; one that differs little from the common sort in Britain ; the other remarkable for the largeness of its ears. The size of this variety is somewhat larger than ours ; but their ears are often a foot long, and broad in proportion. The Syrians keep them chiefly for their milk, of which they yield a considerable quantity§. The present race of goats in the vicinity of Jerusalem, are of this broad eared species. To this kind of goat, so different from the common breed, it is probable the prophet refers : “ As the shepherd taketh out of the mouth of the lion, two legs or a piece of an ear, so shall the children of Israel be taken out, that dwell in Samaria and in Damascus||.” It is indeed the intention of the prophet, to express how few of his people escaped from the overthrow of their country, and were settled in foreign parts ; but it would have been hardly natural to suppose, that a shepherd would exert himself to make a lion quit a piece of an ear, only of a common goat ; it must therefore be supposed to refer to the long eared kind. Rauwolff observed goats on the mountains around Jerusalem, with pendant ears, almost two feet long.

* Ps cxix. 176.

† Is. liii. 6.

‡ 1 Pet. ii. 23.

§ Russel's Hist. of Aleppo.

|| Amos iii, 12.

Goats are chiefly kept in the east for their milk, of which they yield a considerable quantity. When they are suffered to rove at large, and to browse on the herbs and leaves which are agreeable to their taste, their milk is sweet and well tasted; while the milk of cows, from their being fed with the refuse of the gardens, is at Aleppo and other great cities, very unpalatable. This circumstance discovers a force and beauty in the promise of Solomon, to the diligent husbandman, which have been generally overlooked: "Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds, and thou shalt have goats' milk enough for thy food, for the food of thy household, and for the maintenance of thy maidens*."

"The high hills," said David, "are a refuge for the wild goats†." The disposition of this fearless and sure-footed creature, to scale the steepest cliffs, to traverse the shelvings of the most frightful precipices, which the foot of man or other animal has never trodden, to occupy the loftiest and most inaccessible crags, to dance on their smallest projections, where it has scarcely room to set down its foot, is well known to every observer of Nature, and furnishes the inspired writer with that beautiful allusion: "Then Saul went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats‡." No toils, no perils could restrain the pursuit of that jealous and cruel monarch; or shake his resolution to shed the blood of his unoffending relation.

Sheep and goats frequently mingle in the same pastures; and on these occasions, the he-goats always take the lead. To this habit, the prophet alludes in his exhortation to Israel: "Remove out of the midst of Babylon, and go forth out of the land of the Chaldeans, and be as the he-goats before the flocks§."

The hair of the goat is manufactured into stuffs of different kinds in the oriental regions. The tabernacle of Moses was covered with curtains of goats' hair, spun by the women of

* Prov. xxvii. 23. † Psal. civ. 18. ‡ 1 Sam. xxiv. 2. § Jer. l. 8.

Israel in the wilderness *. In the Song of Solomon, the hair of the spouse is compared to a flock of goats from mount Gilead †; that is, the hair of a flock of goats, which, in some species, grows very long, and is shorn like the wool of sheep:

“Nec minus interia barbas, incanaque menta
Cinyphii tondent hirci, setasque comantes,
Usum in castrorum et miseris velamine nautis.”

Geor. b. 3, l. 311.

The celebrated author of *Theron and Aspasio*, gives the allusion a different turn. The amiableness of the church in the exemplary conversation of true believers, is displayed by a copious growth of hair, which flows down from the parted forelock in decent curls. Thy hair is as a flock of goats, that are seen afar off, and appear in a pendant attitude, from the summit of mount Gilead; most agreeably adorning the place, and detaining the spectator's eye. This exposition takes in a circumstance which corresponds with the pensile position of the hair; renders the comparison more full and exact; and is, according to the observation of a most accurate judge, one of the chief remarkables in such a prospect:

“Non ego vos posthac, viride projectus in antro,
Dumosa pendere procul de rupe videbo.”

Vir.

Goats' hair is of two kinds; the one long and coarse, is used in the manufacture of tent curtains, sails, and other fabrics of the same kind; the other is much finer; it grows under the coarse hair, and has received the distinguishing name of goats' wool.

“Alter rixatur de lana sæpe caprina.”

Hor.

It is fabricated into stuffs, which, according to the ancients, almost equal silk in fineness. Hence, it is easy to perceive the reason that Michal, the daughter of Saul, placed a pillow of goats' hair for a bolster to the image in the bed of David, that it might in some degree represent his hair; for it has been asserted, that human hair in the regions of the east, very much

* Exod. xxvi. 7. and xxxv. 26.

† Song iv. 1.

resembles the hair of goats: hence, those who were bald, sometimes endeavoured to conceal the defect, by covering their heads with the skin of a kid. In this manner, Rebekah disguised the neck and hands of Jacob, that his father might take him for Esau, who was by the testimony of the inspired writer, “a hairy man.”

Goats' milk has been long in use for medicinal purposes among almost every nation, and in many places it is the common food of the inhabitants. This may be inferred from these words of Solomon: “And thou shalt have goats' milk enough for thy food, for the food of thy household, and for the maintenance for thy maidens*.” The ox, says Jerome, was made for ploughing, the horse for riding, the dog for watching, the she-goat for milk, and the sheep for wool. Galen mentions the milk of that animal as the common food of the peasant; and Varro makes the same remark.

The sacred writers frequently allude to the kid; and the term which they employ uniformly signifies a young goat. Some writers contend that *קִיד* denotes also a lamb; but no instance of this meaning occurs in the Scriptures, nor in any Syrian or Arabian author; the opinion of Kimchi, and other Rabbinnical writers, therefore, is unsupported by any proof, and consequently is entitled to no regard.

In the Holy Scriptures, the term (*קִיד*) Gedi is very often connected with (*הַעִזִּים*) Haizim; and the phrase is rendered, in our translation, kid of the goats. Thus Rebekah commanded her son Jacob, “Go now to the flock, and fetch me from thence two kids of the goats †; and I will make them savoury meat for thy father, such as he loveth.” This phrase is not used with the view of distinguishing a young goat from a lamb; for it has been just observed, that the original term is never employed to denote a lamb, but to signify a very young kid that still requires the dug and the watchful care of its mother. The celebrated Bochart is not entirely satisfied with

* Prov. xxvii. 27.

† Gen. xxvii. 9.

this reason, because, in several parts of Scripture, he found the phrases שְׂעִיר עִיִּים, *Sheir Izim*, and צִפְּרִי עִיִּים, *Tsephir Izim*, a male of the goats, which cannot be understood of a kid, because, in Daniel, it is described as full grown, armed with horns, engaging in combat with the ram, casting him down to the ground, and stamping upon him with his feet; which by no means agrees with the tender age of a kid. But the original phrases are not the same; the term which, in the book of Daniel, is rendered he-goat, signifies, in general, a rough shaggy animal, and is, therefore, placed in that construction, to determine what particular creature is intended. By a kid of the goats, then, is meant one of a tender age, or that is still suckled by the dam.

The village of Engedi, situate in the neighbourhood of Jericho, derives its name from the Hebrew word (עֵין) *Ain*, a fountain, and (כִּידִי) a kid. It is suggested by the situation among lofty rocks, which, overhanging the valleys, seem to threaten the traveller with immediate destruction. A fountain of pure water rises near the summit, which the inhabitants call Engedi, the fountain of the goat, because it is hardly accessible to any other creature.

Among the Hebrews, the kid was reckoned a great delicacy. Hence, when Isaac sent his son Esau to procure him savoury meat, such as he loved, Rebekah prepared for him two kids of the goats, dressed, no doubt, in various ways, and with different sauces, that the aged patriarch might choose what was most agreeable to his taste. In the same manner, Gideon, the chief magistrate of Israel, and Manoah, the father of Samson, entertained the angel of the Lord, who appeared to them in human form, and was regarded by them as a person of their own order. The patriarch Judah sent a kid to Thamar, his daughter-in-law; and Jesse, the father of David, reckoned it a present not unworthy of a king; for he "took an ass laden with bread, and a bottle of wine, and a kid, and sent them by

David his son unto Saul*.” These instances shew in what light we are to consider the complaint made by the elder brother of the prodigal son in the parable, that his father had never given him a kid to entertain his friends ; although he had not suffered him to want the usual comforts of life, he had never enabled him to treat them with so great a delicacy.

The Jewish legislator three times forbids his people to “seethe a kid in his mother’s milk.” The meaning of this law has been greatly disputed, although the terms in which it is couched, are sufficiently clear and precise. It is the opinion of some writers, that the prohibition refers to a kid in the womb of its mother, which in that state is nourished only with milk ; but the opinion of Clemens, that the people of Israel had been in the practice of eating the fœtus of a goat, which this precept was intended to prohibit, is supported by no proof. The disgusting custom of eating the fœtus of a sow, is indeed mentioned by Plutarch ; but we have no proof that it was known to epicures in the times of Moses. Other expositors imagine, that the Jews were by this precept forbidden to take away the life of a kid, before it was eight days old, when, according to them, it may subsist without the aid of its mother’s milk. This exposition is supposed to be confirmed by another precept : “When a bullock, or a sheep, or a goat is brought forth, then it shall be seven days under the dam ; and from the eighth day, and thenceforth, it shall be accepted for an offering made by fire unto the Lord†.” But since the law, which prohibited the people of Israel to offer in sacrifice “the young of the herd, or of the flock,” before the eighth day, is immediately subjoined to the precept concerning the oblation of the first ripe fruits, and the first born, in the twenty-second chapter of Exodus ; so, in the twenty-third and thirty-fourth chapters, the law which forbids to seethe a kid in his mother’s milk, follows the same precept ; and by consequence, not only the sacred, but also the common use of the kid, is prohibited before the eighth

* 1 Sam. xvi. 20.

+ Lev. xxii. 27.

day. Such is the opinion, and the reasoning by which it is supported ; but it must be evident to every reader, that a kid is as much in his mother's milk all the time he is suckled, as during the first eight days ; nor can any reason be imagined, why he may not be said to be in his mother's milk on the seventh day from his birth, rather than on the eighth or the ninth.

Others are of opinion, that, according to this precept, a sucking kid was at no time to be slain, either for sacred or common use. The she-goat suckles her young about three months ; and till this period, it was not to be subjected to the sacrificing knife. But it is very improbable, that the Jews were forbidden the use of a kid for so long a time ; for that which the law permits to be offered in sacrifice to God, may surely be eaten by his people. Nor was any species of food prohibited by the law, but for ceremonial impurity. But that cannot be reckoned legally unclean, which the law permits to be offered in sacrifice at the altar. He permitted a sucking kid or lamb, to be offered on the eighth day ; a sure proof they were not reckoned unclean, while they remained under the dam. The prophet Samuel offered a sucking lamb as a burnt-offering to the Lord, on a day of public humiliation ; and God condescended to give them a strong proof of his acceptance, in utterly discomfiting their enemies, by a furious tempest of thunder and lightning *. If, therefore, a sucking kid might be offered in sacrifice to God, it might surely be eaten by his people.

Nor is their opinion more tenable, who say, that by this law the dam and her suckling were not to be slain at the same time. To cherish kind and humane feelings among the chosen seed, Jehovah forbid them to kill a cow, a sheep, or a goat, on the same day with their young ; but the precept under consideration cannot naturally bear such a meaning. Had this been the design of Moses, why did he not say in plain terms, Thou

* 1 Sam. 7. 9.

shalt not seethe a kid and his mother at the same time? He must, therefore, have meant what the words naturally suggest, that a kid is not to be seethed in the milk of his mother. The barbarous custom to which the lawgiver alludes, probably existed in some neighbouring countries, and particularly in Egypt, from whose iron yoke they had just been delivered; either because the flesh dressed in this manner was more tender and juicy, than when roasted with fire, or boiled in water; or, which is more probable, while at the feast of ingathering, they gave thanks to God for the mercies they had received, and expressed their dependance upon him for future blessings, they were not to expect his favour by imitating the superstitious rites of the heathens, among whom they had lived so long, who at the end of their harvest seethed a kid in his mother's milk, and sprinkled the broth in a magical way upon their gardens and fields, to render them more fruitful next season.

The goat was one of these clean beasts, which, under the law, prefigured the Saviour of sinners. The Paschal lamb was a type of Christ dying for the sins of his people; but the goat had the honour of prefiguring both his death and resurrection. On the day of expiation, the high priest received from the congregation two he-goats, and presented them before the Lord, at the door of the tabernacle. He then cast lots upon the two goats: "one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scape-goat;" or, to determine which of them should be offered in sacrifice, and which conducted into the wilderness. The Greek interpreters call the scape-goat a defender from evils, the name which the heathens gave to their tutelary gods; because he bore away into the desert the sins of the congregation, which in solemn confession had been laid upon him, and all the evils which followed in their train. As the same animal could not prefigure both the death and resurrection of the Redeemer, two were selected on this occasion; of which the one was by lot offered in sacrifice, as a type of the death of Christ, while

the other was preserved alive, and let loose in the wilderness, to denote his future resurrection.

The Dog.

The watchful guardian of the flock, is next entitled to our consideration. Independent of his beautiful figure, his strength, his vivacity, his agility, he possesses every internal excellence, which in a lower animal can attract the favourable regard of man. A passionate, and even a ferocious and sanguinary temper, renders the wild dog formidable to all animals; but in the domestic state, it gradually disappears, and is succeeded by the amiable sentiments of attachment, and the desire of pleasing. So tractable is his disposition, and so diversified his talents, that the art of training the dog seems to have been among the first invented by man; and, says Buffon, the result of this art was the conquest and peaceable possession of the earth. Without his assistance, how could man have conquered, tamed, and reduced the other animals into bondage? How could he still discover, hunt down, and destroy noxious and savage beasts? The dog, therefore, is necessary to the safety of man, and to his dominion over the lower animals. So convinced were the first generations of men of the necessity and importance of his services, that they sometimes gave his name to their children. Among the Arabians, a man is occasionally called Celb, and a woman Celba; both of which are derived from the Hebrew root (כלב) Celeb, a dog. A prince of Judah bore the name of Caleb, or the dog; and from the same root, the royal Psalmist gave one of his sons the name of Cileab. These are incontestible proofs, how greatly the dog was valued among the shepherd kings and people of the east. The patriarch Job refers so familiarly to the dogs of his flock, that we must conclude that animal had been long in the service of the shepherd, before the times in which he flourished. Faithful and affectionate, he watches over the property of his master; and his voice is better heard, and more regarded in the flock, than that

of his owner. The flocks and herds committed to his care, he conducts and protects with singular attention and prudence, and seldom employs force against them, but for the preservation of peace and good order. But this character belongs to him only in a domestic state, and under strict and proper discipline; for in a wild state, and in desert or depopulated countries, he differs not in his manners from the wolf, excepting by the facility with which he may be tamed.

No animal is more susceptible of impressions, more easily modified by moral causes, and more subject to alterations occasioned by physical influence. In very warm climates, he is liable to degenerate; in a few years he loses his voice, barks no more, but makes a dismal kind of howling noise, and in some countries, becomes perfectly mute; he loses also the elegance of his form, and sinks into an ugly animal with a sharp muzzle, long erect ears, and a long pointed tail. This deformed and mute creature, is of no use to man: destitute of voice, of instinct, and activity, he is no longer qualified to take charge of his flocks, to guard his dwelling, or aid him in the destruction of noxious animals. To these important facts, the prophet Isaiah alludes in terms which cannot be mistaken: "His watchmen are blind; they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy dogs, which can never have enough*." The prophets and the priests of Israel had become so degenerate, that they could no longer discharge their duty; they were not merely unwilling, they were become incapable of acting a part becoming their station. The incapacity of a degenerate dog is physical; theirs was moral, but in consequence of prevailing corruption, not less incurable than the other. At once slothful and rapacious, servile and overbearing, they provoked the wrath of Jehovah, and excited the scorn or detestation of his people.

In a wild state, dogs unite in troops to hunt the prey, and

* Isa. lvi. 10.

often direct their combined attack against the fiercest and most powerful beasts of the forest. Their passions, even after they have submitted to the dominion of man, are easily inflamed; and when one opens, the whole pack instantly join in the cry, and begin the pursuit. In this manner acted the Jews, who combined against the life of their Saviour. The fickle and sanguinary multitude that shouted a few days before, "Hosannah to the Son of God," joined with equal promptitude and eagerness in the cry of their leaders, before the tribunal of Pilate, "Crucify him, crucify him." To this circumstance, David in spirit, alludes in the twenty-second psalm, where he describes the sufferings of his Son and Lord: "Dogs have compassed me, the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me; they pierced my hands and my feet*."

The dog is naturally a beast of prey, and the food which he prefers, is the flesh of animals. Hence, the law of Moses commanded: "Neither shall ye eat any flesh that is torn of beasts; ye shall cast it to the dogs†." The sanguinary temper of this animal, is established by many incontrovertible proofs; he licks the blood and devours the carcases of the slain. The dogs licked the innocent blood of Naboth; and still following their natural instincts, according to the prediction of Elijah, they licked the blood of a royal murderer, and eat the flesh of his partner in guilt‡. So fierce is their nature, so cruel their devastations, that in the wrath of Heaven, they are joined with the sword, the ravenous bird, and the savage beast, in executing the sentence of Divine justice upon guilty and unrepenting nations: "and I will appoint over them four kinds, saith the Lord; the sword to slay, and the dogs to tear, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the earth, to devour and destroy§." The complete deliverance of God's ancient people from the power of their enemies, was in ancient prophecy marked by the same phenomenon: "The Lord said, I will bring again from Bashan, I will bring my people again from

* Psa. xxii. 16.

† Exod. xxii. 31.

‡ 1 Kings xxii. 19.

§ Jer. xv. 3.

the depths of the sea ; that thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies, and the tongue of thy dogs in the same*.”

But this voracious animal easily accommodates himself to other kinds of food ; the sacred writer accordingly observes, that “the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master’s table †.” In a simple and unrefined state of society, they are not excluded from the apartment and the table of their master, but share in his comforts, as in his toils and privations. In the days of Homer, persons in the highest ranks of society, allowed their faithful dogs to wait around their festive boards, and gather up the fragments of their meals. Not fewer than nine of these animals attended at the table of Patroclus.

Εννεα τῷ γε ἀνακλὶ τραπέζης κυνες ἦσαν. *Il. b. 23. l. 173.*

In the seventeenth book of the *Odyssey*, he celebrates the attention of Ulysses to his dog Argus, and puts the following words into the mouth of his hero, when, on his return to Ithaca, he found him lying neglected before the doors of his palace :

οἷοι τε τραπέζης κυνες ἀνδρῶν

Γιγνοντ', ἀγλαιῆς δὲ ἐνεκὲν κοίμεσθαι ἀνακτες. *Odyss. b. 17. l. 308.*

Such are the dogs which are fed at the table of heroes, which kings rear for their own pleasure. The princes of those days, were not ashamed to carry home to their dogs, the crumbs which fell from the table of their entertainer, or the fragments which remained after the feast. This ancient custom, so contrary to all our ideas of propriety, is mentioned by Homer in these lines :

Ὦς δὲ ὅταν ἀμφὶ ἀνακτα κυνες δαιτηθέν ἰοντα

Σαίνωσ' αἰεὶ γὰρ τε φερί μείλιγματα θυμῶ. *Odyss. b. 10. l. 216.*

The dogs watched their master when he returned from a feast, and fawned around him ; for he always brought them some fragments grateful to their taste. So poor and miserable was the afflicted Lazarus at the rich man’s gate, that, like the dogs which came and licked his sores, as they waited the return of their master from the feast, he desired to eat of the crumbs

* *Psa. lxxviii. 22. 23.*

† *Mat. xv. 27.*

which had been reserved for them, and to receive his share with them at the gate, from the hand of their owner, as he passed into his house.

The ancients, like some modern nations, unacquainted with the useful contrivances of these times, conveyed their food into the mouth with their hands; and when they had finished their meal, cleansed their fingers with the soft and fine part of the bread, which they called *απομαγδαλια*; this they afterwards threw to the dogs. To these, the woman of Canaan probably refers: "The dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table*.

Their voracious appetite reconciles them to the most impure species of food; in allusion to which, the wise man observes, "As a dog returns to his vomit, so a fool returns to his folly†." Even the matter of a running sore, is not disagreeable to their taste; for in the parable, the dogs came of their own accord, and licked the sores of the poor beggar. When wounded, their own tongue is their physician, with which licking their sore, they are restored to health.

Τρώοντες δὲ ἔχουσι τὴν γλωτταν φαρμακον.

Ælian.

He has, observes an ancient writer, the native aid of a powerful saliva.

"Ipse habet auxilium validæ natale salivæ." *Gratius.*

When he drinks, he does not take in the water with a full draught, after the manner of some other animals, but by lapping, which the Arabians call drinking with the tongue. The orientals often imitated the dog in his manner of drinking; and among the ancient people of God, the practice seems to have been very common. By this custom, Jehovah tried the forces of Gideon: "And the Lord said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink‡." The people who lapped as a dog, standing on their feet, and taking up the wa-

* Mat. xv. 27.

† Prov. xxvi. 11.

‡ Judges vii. 5.

ter from the river with their hand, evinced an alacrity and fortitude, which eminently fitted them for the approaching contest; while those who bowed down upon their knees, and inclined their whole body to drink, betrayed a lazy and slothful disposition, unbecoming the character of a warrior, and ill adapted to the nature of the service for which they were levied.

Many cities in Syria, and other parts of the east, are crowded with dogs, which belong to no particular person, and by consequence, have none to feed them, but get their food in the streets, and about the markets*. These allusions are clearly involved in the prayer of the royal Psalmist for deliverance from his enemies: "And at evening let them return; and let them make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city. Let them wander up and down for meat, and grudge if they be not satisfied†."

The vicious dispositions and habits of this animal, are not less numerous and important, than the valuable qualities for which he has been so greatly celebrated. His insatiable voracity has been proverbial in all ages; so gross are his inclinations, that they will not bear to be described, but we may form some idea of them from his greedily devouring his own vomit. So wrathful, and even truculent, is his disposition, that he often seizes upon a stranger without any provocation; so frequent and dangerous are his attacks, that the traveller is reduced to the necessity of arming himself with a staff in defence of his person. To this well known circumstance, Goliath indignantly refers in his invective to David: "Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves?" But if the dog is prompted by an irresistible propensity to attack the passing stranger, his forbearance toward the many thousands of Israel, when they took their departure from the land of Egypt, must be ascribed to the miraculous interposition of Divine providence, for on that memorable occasion, not a dog moved his tongue against any of that people.

* Russel's Hist.

† Psa. lix, 14, 15.

His irritable disposition is the foundation of that beautiful proverb: "He that passeth by and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears*." He wantonly exposes himself to immediate danger, which he can neither resist nor avoid. No animal, says the celebrated Scaliger, is more uncivil than the dog; for in the largest buildings, two of them can scarcely live peaceably together. Envious and inhospitable, he refuses to associate with those of his own species, or joins himself only to a few chosen companions. So great is his selfishness, that he desires to possess every thing himself, and never submits to share his booty with others but by force.

The shameless impudence of the dog in season, and when pinched with hunger, has been observed in every age, and among every people. A dog, and a person of unblushing impudence, were among the Greeks convertible terms. In support of this assertion, many proofs might be produced from their best writers; but the following passage from Homer, in which Achilles charges Agamemnon with having the impudence of a dog, joined to the timidity of a deer, must suffice.

Οἰοῦμαι, κυνὸς οἰμῶματ' ἔχων, καρδίην τ' ἐλαφροῖο. *Il. b. 1. l. 225.*

These, it is probable, are the traits in the character of the dog, which, added to his fawning servility, have from time immemorial, drawn down upon him the unqualified contempt of mankind. The patriarch Job, clearly intimates the state of public feeling, in reference to this valuable animal, when he indignantly tells his persecutors: "But now they that are younger than I, have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock†." The contempt in which the dog was held in the times of David, is strongly expressed by Abner, in his reply to Ishbosheth: "Am I a dog's head," or as it is rendered in the Syriac, the head of the dogs, - - "that thou chargest me to-day with a fault concerning this woman?" Although I am commander in chief of the armies of Israel, yet hast thou despised

* Prov. xxvi. 17.

† Job. xxx. 1.

me as if I were only the conductor of dogs. Had not the dog been reckoned a very vile and contemptible animal, Abner could not have expressed himself in such terms. So vile in Solomon's estimation was a living dog, that he places him in opposition to a dead lion*. The son of Jesse, to express the low opinion he had of himself, and by consequence, the unreasonableness of his sovereign's conduct, addresses him in these words: "After whom is the king of Israel come out? after whom dost thou pursue? after a dead dog, after a flea†." Mephibosheth, as a proof of his deep humility, thus addresses David: "What is thy servant, that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am‡? When the prophet predicted to Hazael, the future king of Syria, the horrid cruelties which the people of Israel were to suffer from his hand, the astonished Syrian exclaimed: "But, what is thy servant a dog (the vilest of all animals), that he should do this great thing?" We know from the words which Homer puts into the mouth of Helen, that the same figure was common among the early Greeks:

Δαερ, ἐπίσσε μαλίσσα πονος φρενας ἀμφιέεικεν

Εἶνεκ' εἰμαιο κυνός. —————

Il. b. 6. l. 356.

"O my brother, since extreme distress has invaded thy bosom on my account, who am but a dog."

The application of this term to Shimei, was the strongest mark of contempt which Abishai could imagine: "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king§?" The father of Grecian poetry, puts it frequently in the mouth of his heroes, when with bitter invectives they provoked their enemies to battle, or triumphed over the fallen antagonist: Pisander calls the Trojans faithless truce breakers, and worthless dogs.

Ἦν εἰμὲ λωέησαςθε, κακαὶ κυνές

Il. b. 13. l. 623.

And Diomed addresses the illustrious Hector in these contemp-

* Eccl. ix. 4.

† 1 Sam. xxiv. 14.

‡ 2 Sam. ix. 8.

§ 2 Sam. xvi. 9.

tuous terms: Dog that thou art, once more hast thou escaped destruction.

Εξ αυ νυν εφυγες θανατον, κυον.

II. b. 22.

The sacred writer applies the reproachful epithet, 1. To the heathen who were aliens to the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise: "It is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it to dogs*." 2. To the profane despisers of the divine word, who cruelly persecute the ministers of religion: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you†." 3. To the enemies of religion in general; thus the Saviour complains: "Dogs have compassed me; the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me --- Deliver my soul from the sword: my darling from the power of the dog‡." 4. To the impure, that are polluted with various crimes: "For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie§." 5. To those who, from worldly motives, entered into the Christian ministry, concerning whom the apostle warns the church at Philippi: "Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers||;" and whose character the prophet Isaiah has drawn in such vivid colours¶.

The law of Moses placed the dog in the class of unclean animals, and stamped upon him a peculiar mark of infamy, prohibiting an Israelite to bring the price of a dog, either in money or in goods, as an oblation to the Lord, and connecting it with the wages of prostitution: "Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore, or the price of a dog, into the house of the Lord thy God for any vow; for even both these are an abomination unto the Lord thy God." This special prohibition was evidently pointed against the idolatrous worship which the superstitious inhabitants of Egypt, from whence the chosen

* Mat. xiv. 26.

† Ch. vii. 6.

‡ Psal. xxii. 16, 20.

§ Rev. xxii. 15.

|| Phil. iii. 2.

¶ Ch. lvi. 10, 11.

people had lately escaped, addressed to that animal. We learn this fact from Juvenal, who complains in his fifteenth satire :

“ Oppida tota canem venerantur, nemo Dianam.”

The testimony of the Latin poet is confirmed by Diodorus, who, in his first book, assures us, that the Egyptians highly venerate some animals both during their life and after their death ; and expressly mentions the dog as one object of this absurd adoration. To these unexceptionable witnesses may be added Herodotus, who says when a dog expires, all the members of the family to which he belonged, worship the carcase ; and that in every part of the kingdom, the carcasses of their dogs are embalmed, and deposited in consecrated ground. Anubis, who held a principal rank among the deities of Egypt, had the head of a dog, and for this reason sustained, in the writings of Roman poets, the title of Anubis the barker.

“ Omnigenumque Deum monstræ et latrator Anubis.”

• *Vir. Æn.* 8.

In other countries, the dog is not worshipped, but offered in sacrifice to their false gods. The Carians immolated a dog to Mars ; and the Lacedemonians followed their example. The Boeotians ratified their covenants by cutting a dog in two, and passing between the pieces ; the Macedonians, as we learn from the authentic page of Livy, observed the same custom ; and the Samothracians, in a deep cavern, sacrificed dogs in honour of Hecate. To preserve the holy people from these abominations, to which, from the native darkness of the human mind, and their long residence in Egypt, they were unhappily prone, the divine lawgiver expressly forbid them to bring the price of a dog, which, in his eyes, was equally hateful as the hire of a whore, into the house of the Lord.

The Hog.

The sacred writers very seldom allude to this animal ; because it was in all probability excluded from the land of Promise, during the whole time of the theocratical government.

It seems indeed, on account of its gross habits, to have been held in great abhorrence by the patriarchs themselves, long before the ceremonial code pronounced it unclean ; for we cannot discover, that it constituted any part of their wealth. The sons of Abraham by Keturah, appear to have regarded it with equal aversion as the descendants of Isaac ; for we do not read, that Job, who was most probably one of their posterity, possessed so much as one of these animals. The inspired writer of 1st Chronicles, mentions the names of several officers, whom David appointed to superintend the herds, the camels, the asses, and the flocks ; but mentions no person to superintend the swine. In the wars which the people of Israel were compelled to wage with the neighbouring states, they frequently obtained an immense booty in flocks and herds, in camels and asses ; but we cannot find that they met with one sow in their numerous expeditions. Porphyry, in his Book *De Abstinencia*, expressly denies that any swine were reared in Judea. This fact seems to be confirmed by a clause in the parable of the prodigal son, which informs us, that he went into a far country to feed swine, which would not have been necessary, had these animals been propagated in his own land. It is not inconsistent with this supposition, that in the time of our Lord, the Gadarenes possessed a herd of two thousand swine ; for they were a Greek colony* ; or rather, the remains of the Gergashites, the aboriginal inhabitants of that region, as the name Gergesenes, given them by the evangelist Matthew, clearly indicates. Some writers maintain, that Gedara and Gergasa were different cities, inhabited by two distinct races of people ; but whatever hypothesis be preferred, it is quite evident, they were not Jewish, but Grecian or Syrian cities, governed by their own laws and customs. Hence, it is by no means wonderful, that they encouraged the breed of an animal to which they felt no particular aversion, although the custom was contrary to the laws and usages of a people, whom, like the

* Joseph, Antiq. b. 17. ch. 13.

rest of the world, they probably despised. Nor was it altogether inconsistent with the design of our Lord's ministry, to pass on certain occasions, the limits of Judea, and visit the dwellings of aliens; for the sacred writer informs us, that he departed on a time into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, where he had mercy on a woman of Canaan, who came out of the same coasts, and cured her daughter. He might therefore, with equal reason, favour the Gadarenes with his presence, and give them an illustrious proof of his omnipotent power. Nor is it inconsistent with this conduct, that, according to his own declaration to the disciples, he was not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel; for the event proved, that he spake only of the general and immediate object of his mission.

Many reasons have been assigned by ancient and modern writers, for the strong antipathy of the Jewish people to this animal; but these it were useless to enumerate, as the ceremonial precept is clear and precise: "And the swine, though he divide the hoof, and be cloven footed, yet he cheweth not the cud; he is unclean unto you *;" and the transgression of this precept was even followed by the most pointed reproofs, and the severest threatenings. The prophet Isaiah charges his degenerate people with eating swine's flesh, and having the broth of abominable things in their vessels †. They had not yet neglected to bring their sacrifices to the altar of Jehovah; but they no longer served their God in sincerity and truth: "He that killeth an ox, is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations ‡." Conduct so contrary to their solemn engagements, so hateful in the sight of the holy One, though long endured, was not always to pass with impunity: "They that

* Lev. xi. 7.

† Isa. lxxv. 4.

‡ Ch. lxxvi. 3.

sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens, behind one tree in the midst, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the Lord *." Such a sacrifice was an abomination to the Lord, both because the eating of blood was prohibited, and because the sacrifice consisted of swine's flesh; and to aggravate the sin of the transgressor, such a sacrifice is compared to the killing of a human victim, or the immolation of a dog; both of which Jehovah regarded with abhorrence. To these precepts and threatenings, which were often supported by severe judgments, may be traced the habitual and unconquerable aversion of that people to the use of swine's flesh; an aversion which the most alluring promises, and the most cruel sufferings, have been found alike insufficient to subdue. Happy for them had they been equally attentive to the weightier matters of their law; happier still, had they understood the true nature and design of these institutions, and acquiesced in their abolition, and the introduction of a better dispensation of mercy, at the coming of the promised Messiah.

He has long since appeared in our nature, and has broken down the venerable barriers which separated the chosen people from the Gentile nations, and blessed his church with greater light and freedom. Those precepts which he issued in the wilderness, concerning clean and unclean beasts, are now abrogated; for it is written: "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man†." "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common‡." The words of Paul are not less clear and precise than those of his Lord: "I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself, - - for the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost§." To the Corinthians he writes, "Meat commendeth us not to God: for neither if we eat, are we the bet-

* Isa. lxvi. 17.

† Mat. xv. 11.

‡ Acts x. 15.

§ Rom. xiv. 14

ter; neither if we eat not, are we the worse*.” “Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no questions for conscience’s sake: For the earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof†.” He teaches the same doctrine in his epistle to the Colossians: “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy-day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath-days: which are a shadow of good things to come; but the body is of Christ. . . . Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (touch not, taste not, handle not; which all are to perish in the using), after the commandments and doctrines of men‡?” “Every creature of God is good,” says the same apostle to Timothy, “and nothing is to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving§;” and to Titus, “To the pure, all things are pure||.” From these passages, it must be evident to every reflecting and unprejudiced mind, that the apostolic prohibition concerning things strangled, and blood, must have been intended to continue only in force for a time, in condescension to the conscientious scruples of the Jewish converts, who were, at the time that decree was made, all zealous of the law. For if nothing is to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving; if we may eat whatever is exposed for sale; if meat neither makes a Christian better nor worse,—then things strangled and blood, may also be used, if some special reason do not render it necessary or expedient to refrain.

The sacred writers borrow some of their parables from this animal; thus, in the book of Proverbs the wise man says, “As a jewel of gold in a swine’s snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion.” The original term denotes the ring, which, in the east, is by way of ornament appended to the nose; and which in some other parts of Scripture, is translated a nose jewel. The meaning of the proverb is, that a beauti-

* 1 Cor. viii. 8.

† Ch. x. 25.

‡ Col. ii. 16, 20.

§ 1 Tim. iv. 4.

|| Tit. i. 5.

ful form and a perverse mind, are as incongruous, as a ring of gold in the snout of that impure animal. The allusion is to an adulterous woman, who transfers her affections from her husband to another, and, like the sow that wallows in the mire, indulges without restraint in the pollutions of illicit love.

An allusion of a different kind, is involved in the direction of our Lord to the multitudes in his sermon on the mount : "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you*." The pearls mentioned in this passage, denote, according to some writers, the mysteries of the gospel; and the dogs and swine, wicked and profane men, who regard them with contempt, and persecute those who receive them and submit to their influence. But in this part of his discourse, our Lord is warning his hearers not to be unmerciful and severe in censuring others, in marking and aggravating their faults, nor to correct their vices or mistakes, while they are chargeable themselves with much more heinous crimes. They were not to suffer sin in their brother, but were bound to reprove his faults, and endeavour his reformation; their counsels and reproofs, however, were to be managed with wisdom and prudence, and were not to be unseasonably lavished on hardened and profligate sinners, who, instead of receiving them in a becoming manner, would be exasperated by them, and turn with fury upon their indiscreet advisers. "Give not wisdom," says the Hebrew adage, "to him who knows not its value, for it is more precious than pearls, and he who seeks it not, is worse than a swine that defiles and rolls himself in the mud; so he who knows not the value of wisdom, profanes its glory."

The fierce and truculent disposition ascribed to the hog, in this proverbial saying of Jesus, perfectly corresponds with the natural history of that animal. He is obstinate and untractable; and of all quadrupeds, the most rude and brutal.

* Matt. vii. 6.

All his habits are gross ; all his appetites are impure ; all his sensations are confined to a furious lust, a brutal gluttony, and a savage cruelty. He devours indiscriminately every thing that comes in his way ; even his own offspring, immediately after their birth. His powers of annoyance and destruction are of no ordinary kind. He grows, in a wild state, to a very large size ; his tusks are from nine to ten inches long ; they are flat, sharp, and bend in a circular form. In the rutting season, he is more ferocious than ever ; and when another male appears, he becomes perfectly furious. He prepares for the combat by turning his side directly to his antagonist, and lowering his head ; and in this attitude, he waits the attack with fearless intrepidity. The usual residence of the wild boar, which differs not in disposition and habits from the domestic, is in the thickest recesses of the forest, or in the reedy marsh ; but when roused by hunger, he leaves his native retreats, makes an inroad into the cultivated parts of the country, and, with undistinguishing rage, spreads destruction wherever he comes. From this brief statement it will appear, that the character given to that animal in the passage under consideration, is perfectly correct. It may be thought to refer more properly to the wild boar, than to the domestic hog ; but their dispositions are nearly the same, as well as the danger to be apprehended from their ferocity.

The hog delights more in the foetid mire, than in the clear and running stream. The mud is the chosen place of his repose ; and to wallow in it, seems to constitute one of his greatest pleasures. To wash him is vain ; for he is no sooner at liberty, than he hastens to the puddle, and besmears himself anew. Such is the temper and conduct of corrupt and wicked men, who had escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, but are again entangled, and overcome : the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.—It is happened unto them according to the true proverb : “The dog is turned to his vomit

again; and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire*." Allured by the promises of the gospel, or alarmed by the terrors of the law, they abandoned some of their evil courses, and performed many laudable actions; but, their nature and inclinations remaining unrenewed by divine grace, they quickly shook off the feeble restraints of external reformation, and returned with greater eagerness than ever to their former courses.

The hog was justly classed by the Jews among the vilest animals in the scale of animated nature; and it cannot be doubted, that his keeper generally shared in the contempt and abhorrence which he had excited. The prodigal son in the parable, had spent his all in riotous living, and was ready to perish through want, before he submitted to the humiliating employment of feeding swine. In Egypt, if we may believe Herodotus, the swine-herd was numbered with the profane, and forbidden to enter the temples of their gods; and even the lowest dregs of the people refused to bestow their daughters upon him in marriage. Homer, it must be admitted, honours, with many commendations, Eumæus, the swine-herd of Ulysses; but it may be inferred, from the total silence of all other ancient poets, that the station of a swine-herd was extremely contemptible in Greece and the surrounding countries. The pastoral bards, in their *Bucolics*, divided the keepers of cattle into three classes; the neat-herds, the shepherds, and the goat-herds. Theocritus never once introduces the swine-herd among those who tended the flocks and herds, in his *Idylls*; and Virgil observes the same guarded silence, in his *Eclogues*; a sure proof that public opinion had placed the keeper of swine among the very refuse of society. These remarks illustrate the miserable condition of the prodigal son, who, by his own mismanagement, fell from a state of affluence and honour, into the deepest indigence and contempt. In want of the necessaries of life, and neglected or despised by every human being, he was fain to

* 2 Pet. ii. 22.

accept of the vilest situation on earth, and to allay the agonizing demands of hunger, by feeding among the swine. But this glowing picture of human wretchedness becomes more interesting, when we recollect, that it is intended to display the extreme and diversified wretchedness of the Gentile nations, before the coming of Christ, and the triumphs of his gospel.

Under the beautiful allegory of a vine, the royal Psalmist describes the rise and fall of the Jewish commonwealth, in this address to Jehovah: "Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt. thou hast cast out the heathen and planted it. Thou preparedst a room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river. Why hast thou then broken down her hedges, so that all they that pass by the way, do pluck her? The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it*." The powers that subverted the Jewish nation, are compared to the wild boar, and the wild beast of the field, by which the vine is wasted and devoured; and no figure could be more happily chosen. That ferocious and destructive animal, not satisfied with devouring the fruit, lacerates and breaks with his sharp and powerful tusks, the branches of the vine, or with his snout digs it up by the roots, pollutes it with his touch, or tramples it under his feet. In Egypt, according to Plutarch, the labours of this ferocious animal are rendered useful to man. When the Nile has retired within his proper channel, the husbandman scatters his grain upon the irrigated soil, and sends out a number of swine, that partly by treading it with their feet, partly by digging it with their snout, immediately turn it up, and by this means cover the seed. But in every other part of the world, the hog is odious to the husbandman:

* Psa. lxxx. 8—13.

——— “prima putatur

Hostia sus meruisse mori quia semena pando

Eruerit rostro, spem que interceperit anni.” *Ovid. Met.*

It was an established custom among the Greeks and Romans, to offer a hog in sacrifice to Ceres, at the beginning of harvest, and another to Bacchus, before they began to gather the vintage; because that animal is equally hostile to the growing corn, and the loaded vineyard. From these examples, it is quite evident that the prophet meant to describe, under the figure of a wild boar, the cruel and implacable enemies of the church. And it is extremely probable, that he alluded to some more remarkable adversary, as Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, or Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon; both of whom, were not less ferocious and destructive, than the savage by which they were symbolized.

The enemies of the church are intended in another periphrasis, by the same writer: “Rebuke the company of the spearmen, (or more literally, the wild beast of the reed), the multitude of the bulls, with the calves of the people*.” The wild beast of the reed probably means the boar out of the forest, that fixes his usual residence among the reeds of the marsh, from whence he issues to devastate the neighbouring fields and vineyards.

——— “tenet ima lacunæ

Lenta salix, ulvæque, leves, junci que palustres,

Viminaque, et longa parva sub arundini canna;

Hinc aper excitus, medios violentus in hostes

Fertur, ut excussis elisus nubibus ignis.” *Ovid. Met.*

Some writers, however, understand it of the hippopotamos, that, like the boar, loves to repose “under the shady trees, in the covert of the reeds and fens.” It is not easy to determine to which of these stupendous tenants of the marsh, the sacred writer alludes: nor is the question of much importance; for the meaning is the same, and the figure equally beautiful and striking.

* Ps. lxxviii 30.

CHAP. VIII.

BEASTS OF PREY.

*The Lion.*

AMONG the beasts of prey to which the Scriptures allude, the first place is due to the lion. That noble animal is strongly made, and of an elegant and majestic form. A stranger to fear, and conscious as it were of his pre-eminent strength, he looks around him with an air of superiority; and when he walks, it is with peculiar gracefulness and ease. The companions of Samson admitted his strength to be equal, at least, to that of the most powerful animal that ranges the forest: "What," said they, "is stronger than a lion*?" Solomon, directed by the Spirit of inspiration, proceeds a step farther, and pronounces him the strongest among beasts†. These statements are confirmed by the testimony of many common writers of undoubted veracity.

Homer declares, that with one shake he breaks the neck of an ox:

Τῆς δ' ἐξ' αὐχεν εἶαζε, λαβὼν κρατερῶσιν ὄσασι. *Il. b. 11. l. 175.*

And in another book, he assures us, that he sometimes carries off the largest and fattest ox in the herd, and breaks his neck, having first seized him with his strong teeth.

———— αὐκὶ πεποιθὼς

Βοσκομένης ἀγέλης βουὸν ἀρπαγή, ἥτις ἀρίστη.

Mr Forbes had the singular felicity, when in the East Indies, to see the lion rush furiously on a goat which had been tied to a tree by way of lure, and seizing it by the neck, with one shake break the bone, and instantly deprive the animal of

* Judges xiv. 18.

† Prov. xxx. 30.

life *. According to some natural historians, the strength of the lion is so prodigious, that a single stroke of his paw is sufficient to break the back of a horse, and one sweep with his tail will throw a strong man to the ground. It is, therefore, with great force and propriety the royal Psalmist, in his pathetic lamentation for Saul and Jonathan, says, "They were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions †."

The courage of the lion is equal to his prodigious strength. Conscious that no beast of the forest dares to disturb his repose, he sleeps in the open air. According to Homer, a lion reared in the mountains, that has been long without food, is impelled by his fearless intrepidity, to attack the crowded fold; and although he find it guarded by dogs and armed men, he does not abandon his enterprize, but boldly leaps into the midst of the flock and seizes his prey, or is himself wounded by a dart thrown from a skilful hand ‡. In another passage, Menelaus yields to Hector, like a full grown lion, which dogs and men have driven with spears and much clamour from the sheep cote; his resolute heart is deeply affected with grief, and he reluctantly leaves the fold. This beautiful and striking figure, Virgil has imitated in these words:

— "ceus sævum turba leonem
Cum telis premit infensis, at territus ille,
Asper, acerba tuens, retro redit. Et neque terga
Ira dare aut virtus patitur, nec tendere contra
Ille, quidem hoc cupiens, potis est per tela virosque."

Æn. b. 9. l. 791.

"As with annoying darts, a troop of hunters persecute a fierce lion; while the appalled savage, surly, louring stern, flinches back, nor rage, nor courage, suffer him to fly; nor can he, for darts and men (though fain indeed he would), make head against them §."

Still more sublime and beautiful are the figures of the sacred

* Oriental Memoirs.

† 2 Sam. i. 23.

‡ Iliad, b. 12. l. 299.

§ Davidson.

writers; while their striking similarity proves that they drew them from the same source, they copied from the same works: "For thus hath the Lord spoken unto me, Like as the lion and the young lion roaring on his prey, when a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him, he will not be afraid of their voice, nor abase himself for the noise of them: so shall the Lord of hosts come down to fight for mount Zion, and for the hill thereof*." The fearless courage of this destroyer was never described with greater energy and elegance, than by the prophet Nahum: "Where is the dwelling of the lions, and the feeding place of the young lions, where the lion, even the old lion walked, and the lions' whelp, and none made them afraid? The lion did tear in pieces enough for his whelps, and strangled for his lionesses, and filled his holes with prey, and his dens with ravin †."

This noble animal has been considered as the most perfect model of boldness and courage in every age, and among every people acquainted with his history; and to say that a man is bold as a lion, is to reward his intrepidity with the highest degree of praise: "He that is valiant," said Hushai to Absalom, "whose heart is as the heart of a lion, shall utterly melt ‡." Such is the fearless intrepidity which the unequivocal tokens of divine favour, and the approbation of a good conscience, impart to the mind of a righteous person: "The wicked flee when no man pursueth, but the righteous are bold as a lion §." The Greek and Roman authors abound in the same figures; Homer says that Hercules had the heart of a lion, (*θυμολεοντα*), and he distinguishes Achilles by the same epithet.

The courage of the lion prompts him to go in quest of his prey, and to meet it in the open field; he has been known to attack a whole caravan, and when obliged to retire, he always retires fighting, and with his face to his enemy ||." To this trait in his character, Job seems to allude in his complaint to

* Isa. xxxi. 4.

† Nah. ii. 11, 12.

‡ 2 Sam. xvii. 10.

§ Prov. xxviii. 1.

|| Ælian, b. 4, ch. 34.

God: "Thou huntest me as a fierce lion." There are times, however, when he does not disdain to lie in wait for his prey, and spring suddenly upon it from his lurking place. To this less honourable habit, the Psalmist alludes in his description of a wicked man: "He lieth in wait secretly as a lion in his den; he lieth in wait to catch the poor*."

When stung with hunger, his fierceness and rage are terrible; at such a time, no precaution which the traveller or the shepherd can use, and no exertion which either the one or the other can make, are sufficient to divert or repel his attack. For want of other food, this devourer, as he is emphatically called in Scripture, will often tear to pieces the hapless passenger, or the tenant of the unguarded hamlet. Fire is what he is most afraid of; yet, notwithstanding the frequent fires with which the Arabian shepherds encircle their flocks; notwithstanding the barking of their dogs, and their own repeated cries and exclamations during the whole night, when he is suspected to be upon the prey,—it frequently happens that the ravenous animal, outbraving all these terrors, will leap into the midst of the fold where the cattle are enclosed, and drag from thence a sheep or a goat. He commonly deprives the victim of life by a stroke of his paw, accompanying the fatal blow with a tremendous roar; he then tears it in pieces, breaks all its bones, and devours it with the utmost greediness. To these circumstances, the sacred writers frequently allude. In the blessing of Gad, we find Moses expressing himself thus: "He dwelleth as a lion, and teareth the arm with the crown of the head;" and the royal Psalmist, in still more striking terms: "Save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me; lest he tear my soul like a lion, rending it in pieces when there is none to deliver†." Hezekiah, in his sickness, complained, "I reckoned till morning that as a lion, so will he break all my bones‡;" and said the prophet in the name of the Lord, "I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah; I, even I,

* Ps. x. 9.

† Ps. vii. 2.

‡ Isa. xxxviii. 4.

will tear and go away, I will take away, and none shall rescue him *."

The voracious greediness of this terrible animal, is remarked by every natural historian; and it has not been overlooked by the sacred writers. The Psalmist compares the wicked "to a lion that is greedy of his prey, and to a young lion that lurketh in secret places;" the murderous enemies of our Redeemer "gaped upon him with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion." Samson characterizes the lion in his riddle, "the eater," or, as it may be rendered, the devourer; and the prophet Jeremiah employs a term of similar import: "Your own sword hath devoured your prophets like a destroying lion†." In one of the most awful threatenings ever uttered by Jehovah, we find the following allusion; "There will I devour them like a lion; the wild beast shall tear them‡."

No creature, when provoked, is so tremendously furious as the lion. He beats his sides and the ground with his tail, agitates his shaggy mane, moves the skin of his face, and knits his large eye-brows; shews his dreadful tusks, and thrusts out his tongue, which is armed with prickles, so hard, that it alone is sufficient to tear the skin and the flesh, without the assistance of either teeth or claws. This description will enable the reader to form an adequate idea of the warlike appearance of certain Gadites, in the train of David, "whose faces," says the inspired writer, "were like the faces of lions§."

The movements of a lion, except when he rushes on the prey, are slow, firm, and majestic. Among the Arabian writers, the man who moves with a proud and solemn step is said to walk as a lion. The wise man, who was deeply skilled in natural history, makes an observation of the same kind: "There be three things which go well, yea, four are comely in going. A lion, which is strongest among beasts, and turneth not away

* Hos. v. 14.

† Jer. ii. 30.

‡ Hos. xiii. 8.

§ 1 Chron. xii. 8.

from any ; a grey-hound ; an he-goat also ; and a king, against whom there is no rising up*.”

The roaring of a lion in quest of his prey, resembles the sound of distant thunder ; and being re-echoed by the rocks and mountains, appals the whole race of animals, and puts them instantly to flight ; but he frequently varies his voice into a hideous scream or yell. “ When the lion roars,” says Sparman, “ the beasts of the forest can do nothing but quake ; they are afraid to lie still in their dens, lest he spring upon them : and equally afraid to run, lest, in attempting to escape, they should take the direction in which he is prowling, and throw themselves into the jaws of their adversary.” No book is more accurate than the Scriptures, even on subjects of natural history, so far as their sublime design admits. The universal terror which the roaring of a lion produces, is noticed by the prophet Amos : “ The lion has roared, who will not fear ? the Lord God hath spoken, who will not prophecy ?” Hence the terror which the thunder of his voice inspires, is not confined to a few of the weaker animals : the fellest savage that ranges the forest, according to the prophet, is unable to resist its influence, as the seer is the voice of Jehovah. Even the variation of his appalling voice into the hideous scream or yell, is recorded by Jeremiah : “ The young lions roared upon him, and yelled, and they made his land waste †.”

The lion, it is said, never roars but when he is in sight of his prey, or in the act of striking it down with his paw. His voice is, therefore, the signal of attack, and commonly of inevitable destruction ; a circumstance which must greatly increase the general terror and dismay. “ Will a lion roar in the forest,” said Amos, “ when he hath no prey ? Will a young lion cry out of his den if he have taken nothing ‡ ?” The invariable connection between the roaring of the lion and the seizing of his prey, is also referred to by the holy Psalmist : “ The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from

* Prov. xxx. 29, 30.

† Jer. ii. 15.

‡ Am. iii. 4.

God* ;” and by the prophet, “For thus hath the Lord spoken unto me, Like as the lion, and the young lion roaring on his prey --- so shall the Lord of hosts come down to fight for mount Zion, and for the hill thereof†.” “The young lions roared upon him, and yelled, and they made his land waste‡.” “There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey: they have devoured souls§.” The same allusion occurs in Ezekiel’s parable of the lion’s whelps: “He became a young lion, and learned to catch the prey, and devoured men. And he knew their desolate palaces, and laid waste their cities; and the land was desolate, and the fulness hereof, by the noise of his roaring||.” In this passage the antecedent is put for the consequent; for, the lion, strictly speaking, does not waste a country by his roaring, but by what invariably follows, the miserable destruction of men, flocks, and herds.

The deep and terrific intonations of the lion’s voice, furnish the sacred writers with many beautiful and striking figures, with which they have adorned their magnificent descriptions. So great are the terror and dismay which his roaring produces, that many animals, which by their swiftness might escape from his fury, astonished and petrified by the sound of his voice, are rendered incapable of exertion. This allusion is involved in these words of Elihu to Job: “After it a voice roareth: he thundereth with the voice of his excellency; and he will not stay them when his voice is heard¶.” A very fearful denunciation of divine wrath, is ushered in by the prophet in these words: “The Lord shall roar from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation; he shall mightily roar upon his habitation; he shall give a shout as they that tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth**.” The prophet Joel uses the same figure, with a slight va-

* Psal. civ. 21.

† Isa. xxxi. 4.

‡ Jer. ii. 15.

§ Ezek. xxii. 25.

|| Ch. xix. 6, 7.

¶ Job xxxvii. 4.

** Jer. xxv. 30.

riation: "The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake*." The tumultuous noise of conflicting warriors, is, with great beauty and effect, compared by the Psalmist to the roaring of a lion: "Thine enemies roar in the midst of thy congregations, they set up their ensigns for signs†." The strong cries of the Saviour, in the hour of his most poignant sufferings for the sins of his people, are represented under the same figure: "Why art thou so far from the words of my roaring?" And the sorrows of David himself: "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old, through my roaring all the day long‡." In the same manner, the term is used by the Greeks to signify the voice of lamentation: "The man who drinks poison," says an ancient Greek writer, "roars, that is, laments with a loud voice."

The prophet Jeremiah, by a catachresis rather unusual, makes the young lion bray like an ass. They shall roar together as lions; they shall yell, or as the word properly signifies, bray as lions' whelps. But the bold figure of the prophet, is vindicated by the prince of Latin poets.

———"iræque leonum

Vincula recusantium et sera sub nocte rudentum."

Æn. b. 7. l. 16.

"The rage of lions reluctant to the chains, and braying at the late midnight hour."

When the lion has seized his prey, he calls his whelps to the feast, by uttering a sound which resembles the bellowing of a calf. The assertion of Plutarch is verified in the lines of Theocritus, where he compares the lamentations of Agave, the mother of Pentheus, over her dead son, to the bellowing of a lioness.

Ὅσσον περ τοκαδὸς τελεθεὶ μυκημα λεαινης

In the book of Revelation, the apostle John uses the same figure: "And the angel cried with a loud voice, as when a

* Joel iii. 16.

† Psa. lxxiv. 4.

‡ Psa. xxii. 2. and xxxii. 3.

lion belloweth (for so the original term signifies), and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices *."

The tremendous roar which the lion utters in the act of seizing his prey, softens, the moment he has killed it, into a deep and hollow murmur. Thus, when Hippomene and Malanta were metamorphosed into lions, instead of words they uttered a low murmuring sound.

"Iram vultus habet, pro verbis murmura reddunt." *Ovid*. Equally minute and exact as the poetical fabulist, is the prophet of Jehovah: "For thus hath the Lord spoken unto me, like as the lion, and the young lion roaring, or (as the word signifies) *murmuring* on his prey," when he is tearing it to pieces, and drinking its blood. It is the same word which the Spirit of God employs to express the muttering sounds emitted by the wizards of ancient times, of which the following example is quoted from the prophecies of Isaiah: "And when they shall say unto you, seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter †."

The manner in which the inspired writers speak of the lion's mouth, would naturally lead to the conclusion, that it is formed to strike a beholder with terror. "Deliver me from the mouth of the lion ‡," was the earnest prayer of David's Son and Lord, in the day of his calamity. The prophet Daniel replied with peculiar emphasis, to the mournful inquiries of Darius: "My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths that they have not hurt me §." The pointed allusion of Paul is not less remarkable: "I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion ||;" and in the estimation of the same writer, to stop "the mouths of lions," was one of the noblest achievements of ancient martyrs ¶. Nor is it an accidental circumstance in the description of the beast, which John beheld in vision rise up out of the sea, that he had a "mouth as the mouth of a lion **." These hints entirely correspond with the

* Rev. x. 3.

† Isa. viii. 19.

‡ Psa. xxii. 21.

§ Dan. vi. 22.

|| 2 Tim. iv. 17.

¶ Heb. xi. 33.

** Rev. xiii. 2.

natural history of that animal. His mouth is very large; his jaws are exceeding strong, and armed with a row of long and massy teeth. When he ranges the forest in search of his prey, the moment he spies the victim, he yawns hideously, rears his hair on end, and with a horrid yell seizes it, and bathes in blood his ravenous jaws.

“Gaudet hians immane, comasque arrexit, et hæret

Visceribus super incumbens: lavit imbroba teter

Ora cruor.” *Vir. b. 10. l. 726.*

In any animal, the teeth, and especially the grinders, excel all the other bones in hardness and solidity; but the teeth of the lion are so extremely hard, that they are selected by the inspired writers to represent the most destructive agents of nature or art. Thus, the prophet Joel summoned his countrymen to weeping and lamentation, and assigned this reason: “For a nation is come up upon my land, strong, and without number, whose teeth are the teeth of a lion, and he hath the cheek teeth of a great lion*,”—strong, well-proportioned, and deeply grooved. In the book of Revelation, the mystical locusts had “teeth as the teeth of lions†.” When the oppressor is deprived of his power, the teeth of the lion, in the figurative language of Scripture, are said to be broken: “By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed. The roaring of the lion, and the voice of the fierce lion, and the teeth of the young lions are broken‡.” This figure the royal Psalmist has adopted in his prayer against the wicked: “Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth; break out the teeth of the young lions, O Lord§.” The strict propriety of the figure, is attested by the lines of a Grecian bard: Nature has given horns to the bulls, hoofs to the horses, swiftness to the hares, a huge mouth armed with teeth to the lions.

Λεγσι χάσμι' οδοντων.

Anac. Ode 2.

The lion's paw is in Scripture called his hand, and repre-

* Joel i. 6.

† Rev. ix. 8.

‡ Job iv. 9, 10.

§ Psa. lcviii. 6.

sented as not less formidable than his teeth. "David said moreover, the Lord that delivered me out of the paw (or hand) of the lion, and out of the paw (or hand) of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine*." The king of Persia made a decree, commanding his subjects to fear the living God, "who hath delivered Daniel from the power (or hand) of the lions†." Bochart contends, that there is no catachresis in this mode of speaking, as learned men generally suppose; for the forefeet of the lion, which he chiefly uses in tearing his prey, while he rests upon his hindfeet, may truly and properly be called his hands. The Greek writers familiarly speak of the lion's hand, by which they mean his forefoot. Oppian says, the lion carries a torpedo under his right hand (Δεξιτερην υπο χειρα), alluding probably to the overwhelming terror which seizes the victim, when it sees him preparing to give it the fatal blow. The lion's paw is armed with very long and sharp claws, which render it still more formidable; and as if he knew how much he surpassed the other animals in this respect, it has been remarked, that he guards them with the greatest care. It is therefore with strict propriety, that David so particularly mentions the kindness of God, in saving him from the paw of that terrible destroyer, and calls it a hand, (in which he has been followed by the classical writers of antiquity,) because it is the instrument with which the savage beast knocks down and tears his prey.

He is a solitary animal, and fixes his abode in the woods and mountains, far removed from the dwellings of men. This unsocial and gloomy disposition, is frequently marked in the sacred volume. Thus Jeremiah threatens the degenerate nobles of Judah: "Wherefore a lion out of the forest shall slay them‡." In the twelfth chapter, we find the same allusion: "Mine heritage is unto me as a lion in the forest: it crieth out against me, therefore have I hated it." That the depth of the forest is his chosen haunt, and not the place of his acci-

* 1 Sam. xvii, 37.

† Dan. vi, 27.

‡ Jer. v, 6.

dental residence, is still more evident from the interrogation of Amos. "Will a lion roar in the forest when he hath no prey *?" Theocritus, in his first Idyll, adverts to this habit: "Even the lion out of the wood lamented him when dying."

Τῆνον χ' ὦ ἐκ ὄρυμοιο λέων ἀνεκλαυσε θανόντα.

But his favourite retreats are on the declivities of woody mountains, whither he retires from the plains, after being satiated with prey. This fact is recognized in the blessing which Moses pronounced on Dan before he died: "Dan is a lion's whelp: he shall leap from Bashan†." The inferior summits of Lebanon swarm with lions and other beasts of prey, which has given occasion to that animated address by the Saviour to his church: "Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon: look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lion's den, from the mountains of the leopards‡." The circumstance has not escaped the notice of uninspired bards; from one of whom we give the following quotation:

"Optat aprum, aut fulvum descendere monte leonem."

He wishes that a boar or a tawny lion would descend from the mountain; and, in a former quotation, Homer insinuates, that the strongest and fiercest lions were (*ορεσιτροφοι*) mountain-reared. But when stung with hunger, they descend from their elevated retreats into the plain and cultivated parts of the country, to prowl about the sheep-cotes or the villages, and often commit dreadful ravages on the defenceless inhabitants. The Cuthites, whom the king of Assyria brought from Babylon, and placed in the cities of Samaria, suffered exceedingly from the depredations of these ruthless destroyers at the beginning of their settlement§. It is no uncommon thing, as appears from the language of the sluggard, to find these dangerous animals ranging the streets of their unwall'd towns and villages: "The slothful man saith there is a lion without: I shall be

* Amos iii. 4.

† Deut. xxxiii. 22.

‡ Song iii. 8.

§ 2 Kings xvii. 24.

slain in the streets ;” and in another proverb, “ There is a lion in the way ; a lion is in the streets *.” Buffon, following Pliny, Eustathius, and other ancient naturalists, informs us, that while young and nimble, the lion subsists by hunting, and seldom quits the deserts or the forests, where he finds plenty of wild animals ; but when he grows old, heavy, and less fit for the exercise of hunting, he approaches frequented places, and becomes more dangerous to man and the domestic animals. It has, indeed, been remarked, that when he sees men and animals together, he attacks the latter, and never the former, unless any man strike him ; for in this case he is wonderfully alert in distinguishing the person who hurts him, and he instantly quits his prey to take vengeance on the offender. These traits in his character, explain the reason that God so often threatens to be as a lion to his ancient people. He discerns at once who it is that transgresses his law, and is prompt in taking vengeance on the sinner. They also throw light on a passage in the prophecies of Hosea. “ For I will be unto Ephraim as a great lion,” that leaves the forest and approaches the habitations of men, and is therefore more to be dreaded ; “ and to the house of Judah as a young lion,” that hunts his prey in the desert or the forest, and is therefore less to be feared †. How exactly this corresponds with historical fact, is well known to every careful reader of the Scriptures ; for Ephraim, or the ten tribes, were driven away from their own land into a distant region, where they were doomed to suffer a very protracted exile ; while Judah continued to hold his possessions an hundred and thirty-three years longer, and when carried into captivity at the end of that period by the king of Babylon, it was only for the short term of seventy years, till the land had enjoyed her sabbaths.

The lion has his den in a cave or thorny brake, or among the thick trees, where he sometimes lies in wait for his prey. Thither he carries the spoils of the chase, with which he feeds

* Prov, xxii, 13. and xxvi, 13.

† Hos, v, 14.

his whelps, or satisfies the demands of his own ravenous maw. Nahum alludes to this invariable practice in these words: "He filled his holes with prey, and his dens with ravin." And said Jehovah to the sorrowful and humbled Job, "Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lion? or fill the appetite of the young lions, when they couch in their dens, and abide in the covert to lie in wait *?"

Like other wild beasts, he slumbers in his covert during the day, that he may return at night to the chace with renovated vigour: "Thou makest darkness, and it is night, wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth. The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God. The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens †."

Although the lion fearlessly meets his antagonist in the open field, in this respect differing from leopards and some other beasts of prey, that never openly attack the fated victim, yet this bold and noble animal occasionally descends to stratagem and ambuscade: "He couches in his den, and abides in the covert to lie in wait." He watches the approach of his victim with cautious attention, carefully avoiding the least noise, lest he should give warning of his presence and designs. Such has the glowing pencil of David painted the insidious conduct of the murderer: "He lieth in wait secretly as a lion in his den: he lieth in wait to catch the poor - - he croucheth and humbleth himself, that the poor may fall by his strong ones ‡." "Like as a lion that is greedy of his prey, and as it were a young lion lurking in secret places §." Statius thus describes the lion watching in his den.

———— "sævo speculantur ab antro

Aut cervum aut nondum, bellantum fronte juvencum."

From his lurking place, he commonly leaps upon the victim at one spring. So, in the farewell prediction of Moses, it is fore-

* Job xxxviii. 39.

† Psa. civ. 20.

‡ Psa. x. 19.

§ Psa. xvii. 12.

told, "Dan is a lion's whelp, he shall leap from Bashan." This fact is attested by all the ancient historians: Aristotle asserts, that when the lion judges himself within reach, he throws himself upon his prey; Pliny says, he leaps with a bound; and Solinus, when he is in full pursuit, he springs forward upon the game. In the same manner acted Dan; proceeding, as it were, by a single bound, from one extremity of Canaan to the other, he invaded the city of Laish, which, after its reduction, he called by his own name.

The incursions of that powerful and merciless destroyer, into the inhabited country, are commonly attended with horrible devastation. Every intelligent reader of the Scriptures will discover many proofs of this assertion, of which only one or two can be quoted. The first is from the prophecies of Balaam concerning the future prosperity of Israel: "Behold the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion; he shall not lie down until he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain*." The second is quoted from the song of Hezekiah, after he was recovered from his sickness: "I reckoned till morning, that as a lion, so will he break all my bones†." When the accusers of Daniel were cast into the lions' den, the prophet informs us, "The lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces, or ever they came at the bottom of the den‡." In Homer, the son of Atreus in battle resembles a lion that singles out for inevitable destruction, an ox, the best of the herd; having put the rest to flight, he breaks his neck, having first seized him with his strong tusks§. And Horace addresses Chloe in the twenty-third ode of the second book,

"Atqui non ego te, tigris ut aspera

Getulus ve leo, frangere persequor."

The full import of the verb to break, in these quotations, may be learned from a passage in the prophecies of Hosea, where

* Num. xxiii. 24.

† Isa. xxxviii. 13.

‡ Dan. vi. 24.

§ Iliad b. 11. l. 175.

Jehovah threatens the ten tribes for their apostacy: "Therefore, I will be unto them as a lion; as a leopard by the way will I observe them; I will meet them as a bear bereaved of her whelps, and will rend the caul of their heart, and there will I devour them like a lion; the wild beast shall tear them*."

According to the prophets, entire regions are sometimes depopulated by his fury: "The young lions roared upon him, and yelled, and they made his land waste†." His devastations are depicted in still more vivid colours in a subsequent chapter: "The lion is come up from his thicket, and the destroyer of the Gentiles is on his way; he is gone forth from his place to make thy land desolate, and thy cities shall be laid waste without an inhabitant‡." These, it must be admitted, are mystical lions, the Cæsars and Alexanders, whom incensed Heaven raises up to punish the nations for their iniquity; but the name of lions is assigned to them, because the valour of a conqueror and the rage of a lion, produce the same deplorable effects. Jehovah accordingly threatens to send wild beasts among his ancient people, which should rob them of their children, and destroy their cattle, and make them few in number, and their highways should be desolate§.

Nature, it is pretended by some writers, has provided for the safety of mankind, by appointing that the lioness shall bring forth but once in her life, and only one cub. Such is the opinion of Herodotus, and many other ancients; but it is contradicted by Homer, who asserts more than once, that the lion rears a number of whelps; and by a much higher authority, the Spirit of inspiration. The prophet Ezekiel, in his parable of the lions' whelps, puts this question: "What is thy mother? A lioness: she lay down among lions, she nourished her whelps among young lions. And she brought up one of her whelps; it became a young lion, and it learned to catch the prey; it devoured men||." Nahum bears his testimony to

* Hos. xiii. 8.

† Jer. ii. 15.

‡ Ch. iv. 7.

§ Lev. xxvi. 22.

|| Ezek. xix. 2.

the same fact: "The lion did tear in pieces enough for his whelps, and strangled for his lionesses*." Ancient writers are much divided in relation to the number of whelps the lioness brings forth at a birth, and the number of times she goes with young. Eustathius inclines to the opinion advanced by some, that she brings forth two cubs, because she has two teats. Philostratus writes, that she has whelps three times; the first time she produces three, the second time two, and the last time one, surpassing all the others in beauty of form and ferocity of disposition. But, as the determination of this point involves the illustration of no text of Scripture, it falls not within the object of this work; it is sufficient to observe, that the united and harmonious testimony of these ancient writers, fully vindicates the language used by the sacred writers on this head.

The lion was of old among the agents which the Judge of all the earth employed to execute his vengeance upon corrupt and impenitent nations. He delivered the remnant of Moab that escaped from the sword, to the devouring jaws of that destroyer; and in the same manner he punished the Cuthites, that Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, sent from Babylon to occupy the cities of Samaria, for their idolatries. In the punishment of more private offenders, we find him often engaged; he killed the prophet who disobeyed the express command of God, not to eat bread nor drink water in Bethel, nor to return by the same road; and the man who refused to smite the prophet, who required him to do so in the name of the Lord†.

Although the lion is the terror of the forest, and has been known to scatter destruction over the fairest regions of the east; yet he is often compelled to yield to the superior prowess or address of man. When Samson, the champion of Israel, went down to Timnath, a city belonging to the tribe of Dan, situate in the valley of Sorek, so renowned for the excellence of its vines, a young lion roared against him; "and the spirit of

* Nah. ii. 12.

† 1 Kings xiii. 24, and xx. 35, 36.

the Lord came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand *." In this instance, the lion was only giving the usual signal for the attack which he meditated, and consequently his kindling passions had not reached their highest excitement; but it appears from the authentic page of history, that the prey is sometimes rescued from his devouring jaws, when his fury is excited to the highest degree of intensity. To this circumstance, the prophet Amos refers, in that part of his prophecy where he describes the extreme difficulty with which a few of the meaner and poorer inhabitants of Samaria, should escape from the power of their enemies: "Thus saith the Lord, as the shepherd taketh out of the mouth of the lion, two legs or a piece of an ear, so shall the children of Israel be taken out that dwell in Samaria." The daring intrepidity, the admirable presence of mind, and great strength of David, when he tended his father's flocks in the wilderness, were subjected to a severe trial, by the attack of a lion, which he thus relates to Saul: "Thy servant kept his father's sheep; and there came a lion and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock; and I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth; and when he rose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him: thy servant slew both the lion and the bear †." In these words, the youthful shepherd indisputably details the particulars of two exploits performed on different occasions; for the lion and the bear never hunt in company. Like the greater part of other wild beasts, they prowl alone, rejecting the society of even one of their own species. "It is not therefore to be supposed, they will associate on such occasions with other animals. A careless reader might imagine that David encountered them both at the same time, and Castalio has been so inconsiderate as to make the text speak this language; for he translates it, There came a lion, *una cum*, together or in company with a bear. But are we to suppose, that these two animals,

* Jud. xiv. 15. † 1 Sam. xvii. 34. Sacred Zoology, Christ. Mag. vol. 6. Bear.

contrary to their nature, entered into partnership on this occasion, and that to seize upon one poor lamb, and divide it between them? "Or if no miracle was wrought in the case, but the victory was achieved by the natural strength and resolution of David, aided by the good providence of God, how many hands must we suppose him to have had, in order at once to seize two such animals, to smite them both, and to rescue the lamb" from their jaws? How was it possible for a single youth, for at that time he was not more than twenty years of age, to encounter with success two of the strongest and fiercest beasts that range the forest? Or if David vanquished these terrible depredators, not by his own courage and address, but by the miraculous assistance of Heaven, still the difficulty is not removed; for he could have no warrant from such a victory to encounter Goliath. It became him to enter the lists with the giant, depending upon the ordinary assistance of God, and the usual vigour of his own arm, not upon a miracle, which God had not promised. To avoid these inconveniences, it is necessary to admit, that David mentions two different rencounters, one with a lion, and another with a bear; in both which he succeeded in rescuing the prey from the devourer. This hypothesis has the advantage of being perfectly consistent with the text; for the particle rendered and, is often disjunctive, and ought to be translated or. Thus, in the law of the passover, it is commanded, "Ye shall take it out from the sheep or from the goats*," and in the precept for securing reverence to parents, "He that smiteth his father or his mother, shall be surely put to death;" "and he that curseth his father or his mother, shall surely be put to death†;" in all which, the connecting particle is the same. But by the law of Moses, only one lamb, or one kid, was to be taken for each household, not two; and if a person smote, or cursed one of his parents, he was guilty of death; in these cases, therefore, the particle is properly rendered or; and by consequence, may be so rendered in the text

* Exod. xii. 5.

† Ch. xxi. 15, 17.

under consideration. The words of David would then run thus: There came a lion or a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock. This version is also required by the verb, which, instead of being in the plural, as the conjunctive particle demands, is in the singular number, which clearly indicates a disjunctive sense. This is confirmed by the next verse, in which David speaks of them in the singular number: "And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth; and when he rose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him." If these two animals had been in company, he could with no propriety have spoken of them in this manner. The meaning therefore is, there came a lion on one occasion, and on another, a bear, and took each a lamb out of the flock; and he went out against each of them, and rescued the lamb from his mouth. Thus, by the favour of providence, did the future shepherd of Israel, on two different occasions, slay both the lion and the bear. Nor ought this to be reckoned an achievement beyond the power of a single combatant; for an ancient poet only admits it to be extremely dangerous, and almost beyond the powers of man, to deliver the prey from the mouth of a hungry lion, but does not venture to pronounce it impracticable:

"Esurienti leoni ex ore exsculpere prædam."

Nor is any mistake imputable to David, when he speaks of seizing a bear by the beard; for the original term sometimes denotes the chin; as in this precept of the ceremonial law: "If a man or woman have a plague upon the head or the beard; then the priest shall see the plague*." He, therefore, seized the lion by his beard, and the bear, that was not favoured with this ornament, by the chin; which entirely removes the difficulty.

The sacred writer has recorded another instance in Beniah, the son of Jehoiada, who "went down and slew a lion in the midst of a pit, in time of snow†." Whether Beniah, listening

* Lev. xiii. 29.

† 2 Sam. xxiii. 20.

only to the suggestions of undaunted courage, or because he could not otherwise reach the shaggy destroyer, went down of his own accord into the pit; or whether, as Bochart contends, he was driven by a storm of snow to take shelter, by accident, in the same pit where the lion had taken refuge just before, from the severity of the weather,—is of little importance; the fact of his encountering a lion, in these unfavourable circumstances, and killing him, is certain. Nor are such instances wanting in the common page of history. Curtius relates in the beginning of his eighth book, that Alexander the Great singly encountered a lion of unusual magnitude, which rushed out upon him, and by one blow laid him dead at his feet: he tells a similar story of Lysimachus, when he was hunting in Syria. But this method of destroying the lion is attended with great danger, and sometimes proves fatal to the assailant; and, therefore, stratagem is commonly preferred to force. He is hunted with large dogs, supported by men on horseback, who dislodge, and force him to retire. But, among the Arabians, the common method is to dig a pit in the spot which he is observed to haunt, which they cover slightly with reeds or small branches of trees, and fixing a live animal upon it, they frequently decoy and catch him. Pliny has mentioned the same practice, to which the prophet Ezekiel alludes: “Then the nations set against him on every side, from the provinces, and spread their net over him; he was taken in their pit*.” The manner in which this is done, Xenophon describes at considerable length: They dig a large circular pit, and at night introduce into it a goat, which they bind to a stake or pillar of earth at the bottom, and then inclose the pit with a hedge of branches, that it cannot be seen, leaving no entrance. The savage beast hearing in the night the voice of the goat, prowls around the hedge, and finding no opening, leaps over, and is taken. When the hunter proposes to catch him in the toils, he stretches a series of nets in a semicircular form, by means of long poles fixed

* Ezek. xix. 8.

in the ground; three men are placed in ambush, among the nets; one in the middle, and one at each extremity. The toils being disposed in this manner, some wave flaming torches; others make a noise by beating their shields, knowing that lions are not less terrified by loud sounds than by fire. The men on foot and horseback, skilfully combining their movements, and raising a mighty bustle and clamour, rush in upon them, and impel them towards the nets, till, intimidated by the shouts of the hunters, and the glare of the torches, they approach the snares of their own accord, and are entangled in the folds.

To destroy the lion, and other beasts of prey, was anciently thought no small part of a warrior's glory. The faithful page of sacred history informs us, that the first oppressors of their fellow-men, endeavoured to conciliate the favourable opinion of the public, by distinguishing themselves in the chace. So late as the time of the crusades, the destruction of a lion was reckoned, by the kings and princes who engaged in those insane enterprises, an exploit worthy of being engraved on their seals, and celebrated in the songs of their bards. The simple memorials in the Old Testament, of the courage and address displayed by various individuals, in single combat with the lion, prove more forcibly, than long and laboured details, the terrible character of that animal, and the severe calamities which the inhabitants of those countries occasionally suffer from his assaults. We discover many qualities in him, which command our admiration and praise; but we also detect many which excite detestation and horror. In the sacred volume, the lion accordingly is at one time the subject of praise, and at another, the object of pointed condemnation. Nothing in heaven or on earth is so sacred and excellent; nothing, on the other hand, so destructive and terrible in earth or hell, which the lion is not in some part of Scripture employed to symbolize. When, for example, the Most High, provoked by the wickedness of individuals or nations, visits their crimes with suitable punishments, he is compared to a lion, who, leaving his den, tears in pieces

the miserable victim with irresistible fury : “ For I will be as a lion unto Ephraim, and as a young lion to the house of Judah : I, even I, will tear and go away ; I will take away, and none shall rescue him*.” By such figures, the Spirit of inspiration intends to shew how tremendous are the judgments of God, and how fearful a thing it is to encounter his penal ire. We must not however imagine, that the rage and fury of that savage destroyer agitate the heart, or influence the proceedings of Deity on any occasion ; infirmity and vice are equally removed from his nature and actings. He is gracious as just, merciful as righteous ; nay he delights in mercy ; but judgment is to him a strange work, in which, abstractly considered, he has no pleasure.

As the living God, in the character of a judge, is compared to a lion ; so, the denunciations of his anger in the sacred writings, are symbolized by the roaring of that terrific animal. “ Will a lion,” said Amos, “ roar in the forest when he hath no prey ? will a young lion cry out of his den, if ye have taken nothing ?” It has been already observed, that the lion roars only when he comes in sight of his prey ; so the Judge of all gives notice to the guilty of his approach to punish them for their iniquities, by the threatenings and terror of his law. These are not like the burst of distant thunder, which startles the hearer for a moment, but does him no harm ; they are a flaming bolt from the superincumbent cloud, which is equally terrible in its explosion, and fatal in its consequences. When the wicked persevere in their evil courses, the Judge of all the earth will not be wanting to the truth of his threatenings, but will certainly render to every one of them at last according to their works. And because the Jews accused their prophets of delighting in the denunciation of punishments, the prophet shews, that the Spirit of God, by his afflatus, constrained him to declare the fearful consequences of their sins. “ The lion hath roared, who will not fear ? The Lord God hath spoken,

* Hos. v. 14.

who can but prophecy?" If all are struck with fear when the lion roars, how much more ought they to be moved by the command of God, whom he hath appointed ministers of his word? When the prophet Jeremiah had formed the resolution no longer to speak in the name of the Lord, he felt himself constrained, by an irresistible impulse, to the faithful discharge of his duty: "Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name: but his word was in mine heart, as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay *."

The lion is also the symbol of our exalted Redeemer. He was a lamb in his sufferings and death, but he became "the lion of the tribe of Judah," when he burst asunder the bands of death, forced open the grave's devouring mouth, and returned to his Father a triumphant conqueror over all the powers of darkness. He is clothed with glorious majesty, and girt about with invincible might. No enemy can disturb the tranquillity of his fearless heart, nor interrupt the progress of his operations; no movement of providence, but he is qualified to guide; no work of judgment or mercy, but he is able to perform. "He speaks, and it is done; he commands, and it stands fast --- none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what dost thou?" In the rapid diffusion of the gospel, and the conversion of many nations to the Christian faith, which commenced in a few days after his ascension, were fulfilled the words of Joel: "The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake, and the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel †." Nor is the preaching of the gospel improperly compared to the roaring of a lion, for it has been heard in every part of the world, and has not only struck the ear, but by its energy has opened a way for itself into the heart, and produced a concern about salvation, which neither length of time, nor change of circumstances could subdue.

* Jer. xx. 9.

† Joel iii. 16.

It symbolizes also the strength, the generosity, and the terrible presence of an angel; for, in the prophecies of Ezekiel, the living creatures or cherubim, the ministers of Divine providence, had each of them four faces; the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side; and the face of an ox, and the face of an eagle, on the left side*. The apostle John was favoured with a vision of the same kind in Patmos: "In the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes before and behind. And the first living creature was like a lion, and the second like a calf, and the third had a face as a man, and the fourth was like a flying eagle." In both visions, the terrible majesty of God in the ministration of angels toward the enemies of his glory, is symbolized by the lion; their constancy, patience, firmness, and assiduity in performing the commands of their Maker, by the ox; their humanity, gentleness, and philanthropy, by the face of a man; and by the face of an eagle, the vigour, the agility, and the sublime tendencies of their celestial nature. Every one of them exhibits a high degree of excellence; the lion holds the first place among wild beasts, the eagle among the birds, an ox among the cattle, and all submit to the supreme authority of man. Of these, observes Bochart, two are wild, the lion and the eagle; two are tame, man and the ox: those to strike terror into rebels; these to impart consolation to the pious. The lion pursues his prey upon the earth, the eagle, among the clouds of heaven; to shew that these angelic ministers of providence, equally control the proceedings of men that crawl upon the ground, and the more powerful and rapid movements of apostate spirits in the regions of the air.

It has formerly been observed that a righteous man, relying upon the favour of his God, and animated by the testimony of a good conscience, is, in the language of Solomon, bold as a lion; and to have the heart of a lion, was, in the estimation of Hushai, the friend of David, the noblest eulogy which could be pronounced

* Ezek. i. 10.

on the brave. The same figures are often applied to the kings and princes of this world, to indicate the power with which they are invested, and the danger to be incurred in provoking their displeasure. "The wrath of a king is as the roaring of a lion;" and in a subsequent chapter, "the fear of a king is as the roaring of a lion; whoso provoketh him to anger, sinneth against his own soul;" that is, exposes his life to destruction: "for the wrath of a king is as messengers of death *."

The strength and power of the Jewish nation is often described in the sacred volume by the same symbol. "Behold," cried Balaam, when from the top of Pisgah he looked down on the innumerable tents of Israel, "the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion; he shall not lie down until he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain." This prediction received its accomplishment in the signal victories which the armies of Israel, under the conduct of Joshua, obtained over the five nations of Canaan. They did not rest, till, completely victorious, they had reduced the whole country to their obedience. The forces of Joshua did not, like some uncivilized hordes in modern times, literally "eat of the prey and drink the blood of the slain," for such inhuman conduct was equally opposed to the character of their God, and the whole tenor of their law. The clause is merely a continuation of the metaphor, and a hyperbolical description of the complete conquest which, by the favour of God, awaited their arms. Such hyperbolical expressions are frequent in the sacred volume; and when viewed in the light of other Scriptures, admit of a sense equally consistent and profitable. Thus, in the reproof which the Psalmist addresses to wicked judges, he declares, "the righteous shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked †;" and in his prayer at the removing of the ark: "The Lord said, I will bring again from Bashan, I will bring my people again from the depths of the sea: that thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies, and the

* Prov. xix. 12. and xx. 2. and xvi. 14.

† Ps. lvi. 11.

tongue of thy dogs in the same*." These phrases only denote that the victory which was to crown their exertions, should be completely decisive.

Balaam adds, in the same prophecy, "He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion, who shall stir him up?" He was, in future times, to subdue the land of Canaan so completely, that no enemy should presume to disturb his repose; which was accomplished in the reign of David and of Solomon his son, when, by the heroic valour of the former, and the unparalleled wisdom of the latter, the whole east was awed and charmed into peace and amity.

The symbols that represented the Jewish people, were often applied to particular tribes, of which a striking instance occurs in the farewell benediction of Jacob: "Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up; he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up †?" And of Gad, Moses said, "Blessed be he that enlargeth Gad: he dwelleth as a lion, and teareth the arm with the crown of the head ‡."

But the sacred writers often allude to the savage disposition of the lion; and in all these instances the name is used in a bad sense. Thus, the great adversary of mankind is compared to a roaring lion that walketh about seeking whom he may devour §. Furious and cruel as the lion when within a single leap of his prey, he thirsts for the destruction of poor mortals, as intensely as that famished destroyer for the blood of the slain, and exerts still greater and more unwearied activity to accomplish his purpose. The name which is imposed upon the arch fiend, is, with much propriety, assigned to the wicked, the victims and instruments of his cruelty and injustice. "The roaring of the lion, and the voice of the fierce lion, and the teeth of the young lions are broken." That the wicked are intended in this passage, is evident from the context: "Even as

* Psa. lxxviii. 4.

† Gen. xlix. 9.

‡ Deut. xxxiii. 20, 22.

§ 1 Pet. v. 8.

I have seen, they that plough iniquity and sow wickedness, reap the same. By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed *." It is used in the same sense by the prophet, where he describes the flourishing state of Christ's kingdom: "No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there †." These are only a few of the numerous instances in which the sacred writers use the name to express the temper and conduct of wicked men. Not only the vicious and profane, the cruel and the unjust in the private walks of life, but also the sceptered oppressor, the blood stained conqueror, the warlike nation, are stigmatized in the holy Scriptures, and held up to the execration of all mankind, under this odious name. "Their roaring shall be like a lion, they shall roar like young lions: yea, they shall roar and lay hold of the prey, and shall carry it away safe, and none shall deliver it ‡." But the name is not confined to the human character, it is extended also to every thing hurtful or destructive to mankind. The sword, for example, is by the prophet compared to the lion, on account of the desolations which it is the means of accomplishing: "Your own sword hath devoured your prophets like a destroying lion §." If these statements have not removed any of the difficulties which the biblical student meets with in his progress, they prove beyond a doubt the closeness and accuracy with which the sacred writers copy nature, and the admirable fitness and propriety of their allusions; and this is no insignificant service to the interests of religion.

The Leopard.

This powerful and ferocious animal is entitled to the second place among the beasts of prey. In the sacred volume, the lion and the leopard are frequently united as if they were homogeneous animals. Thus in the Song, the spouse is invited

* Job iv. 8, 9, 10.

† Isa. xxxv. 9.

‡ Isa. v. 29.

§ Jer. ii. 30.

to "look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lion's dens, from the mountains of the leopards." The prophet Jeremiah directs the combined force of the lion, the wolf, and the leopard, against the cities of his corrupt and impenitent countrymen *. A similar denunciation is pronounced by Hosea against the ten tribes: "Therefore I will be unto them as a lion; as a leopard by the way will I observe them." They are associated in the same manner in the lines of Homer:

Οὐτ' ἐν πορδαλίου τοσσόν μενός, ὅτε λέοντος.

Il. b. 17. l. 20.

"Neither the leopard nor the lion possesses so great strength."

The leopard, says the natural historian, is rather less than a mastiff dog, which, in form, he greatly resembles; he has a ferocious air, a restless eye, a cruel aspect; he is very nimble in his movements, and has a cry similar to that of an enraged dog, but stronger and more hoarse; he has a tongue equally rough as the lion's; strong and pointed teeth, hard sharp claws, a beautiful skin of a more or less deep colour, variegated with black circular spots, but subject to greater variety than the panther. To this last feature, the prophet Jeremiah beautifully alludes, in stating the invincible power which a vicious habit acquires over the human mind: "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil †."

This terrible animal delights in the thick and gloomy forest, and chooses his abode in its deepest recesses; but he often frequents the banks of rivers, and the environs of sequestered habitations, where he endeavours to surprise domestic animals, and the wild beasts which come to the river in quest of water. He seldom attacks men, even when provoked: he climbs trees with great facility in pursuit of his prey, which seldom escapes him. He is exceedingly swift and subtile, rapacious and gluttonous; and his fiery restless eyes are continually rolling in search of blood. The prophet Habakkuk, describing the march

* Jer. v. 6.

† Ch. xiii. 23.

of the Chaldees against Jerusalem, alludes to the extraordinary swiftness of this animal in these words: "Their horses also are swifter than leopards." This agrees exactly with the character given him by Homer, (*παρδαλις τε θοαι*), "the swift leopards;" and with the testimony of Ælian, that the leopard pursues the other animals with great swiftness. Eustathius asserts, that he excels all other animals in swiftness, and as it were, flies before the eyes of the hunters.

But he does not trust for success to his swiftness alone; Pliny remarks, that he often conceals himself among the thick branches of a tree, and from thence darts down upon the passing victim. This allusion is involved in the threatening: "As a leopard by the way will I observe them*." So wakeful are the eyes of Jehovah, so keen is his inspection, and equally sudden and irresistible as the downward spring of the watchful leopard, is the vengeance which he inflicts upon his enemies. The allusion to the insidious habit and ferocious character of this creature, is still more striking in the denunciation of Jeremiah: "A leopard shall watch over their cities: every one that goeth out thence shall be torn in pieces." For what purpose Jehovah threatened to watch over their cities, is explained in the next clause, and is admirably illustrated in another passage of his book: "I have watched over them to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict†." A similar expression occurs in the prophecies of Daniel: "Therefore, hath the Lord watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us‡."

Homer says, that the leopard never can be satiated with prey; and many unexceptionable witnesses declare, that the ferocity of his disposition cannot, by the most assiduous and artful management, be wholly subdued. How great then must be the change produced in his truculent heart, when, according to ancient prophecy, he "shall lie down with the kid;" but still more singular is the alteration which the gospel of peace, under

* Hos. xiii. 7.

† Jer. v. 6, and xxxi. 28.

‡ Dan. ix. 14.

the salutary influence of the divine Spirit, effects in the moral and religious feelings of mankind. This great and desirable event, which has been partly realized already, but is yet in a great degree matter of hope, is represented by the prophet Isaiah, with his usual felicity of expression, under the striking figure of a general and cordial pacification among all the beasts of the field. "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them."

The Grecian monarchy, under Alexander of Macedon and his successors, the rise and fall of which, Daniel beheld in vision, was represented by a leopard; and surely, a more appropriate symbol to indicate the insatiable ambition of Alexander, the vigour of his counsels, the rapidity of his movements, the impetuosity of his onset, and the number and variety of the nations that fought under his banner,—numerous and diversified as the spots on the skin of that animal,—can scarcely be devised.

The leopard is of a nature so fierce and untractable, that man may be said rather to subdue, than to tame him; he never loses entirely his ferocious disposition. To train him for the chase, which has been frequently done in the east, great attention is necessary, and still greater caution in conducting and exercising him. He is carried to the field in a cart, shut up in a cage, the door of which is opened when game appears. Starting from his den, he springs toward the animal, and generally at three or four bounds seizes and strangles it. But if he miss his aim, he becomes furious, and sometimes attacks his master, who commonly prevents this hazard by carrying along with him pieces of flesh or live animals, as lambs or kids, one of which he throws to him to pacify his rage. Demarchais asserts, that the Guinea leopard is incapable of being tamed; but a higher authority says, that every kind of animal may be tamed, and has been tamed by man; and, therefore, the leopard of Guinea might be subdued, if sufficient time and pains were bestowed

in the training. How admirable then is the power of the gospel, which subdues, tames, and humanizes the heart of a wicked man, who is equally stubborn, cruel, and untractable as the leopard; which eradicates the very principles of deceit and violence; chains the furious passions, and purifies the unholy affections and grovelling appetites, and renders him gentle, moderate, humble, and inoffensive. Such are the happy effects, which ancient prophets and holy apostles ascribe to the influence of religion upon the human heart.

This formidable animal loves to roam on the summits of lofty mountains, where he remains in gloomy solitude, till hunger compel him to leave his retreat, and descend into the plain. Solomon alludes to this habit in the Song, where, under the significant emblem of lions and leopards, he describes the men of this world, who, for the degraded state of their nature; for their devouring and insatiable desires, which, like the voracious appetites of the leopard, are never satisfied; and for their malicious dispositions, which stimulate them to plot against the peace and safety of righteous and holy men,—are with great propriety represented by these beasts of prey. Environed by the men of this world, the church of Christ is in no less danger than a solitary inhabitant of the wood, or the mountain, where the lion and the leopard range in quest of their prey. She is, therefore, invited to leave such dangerous solitudes, and take up her residence upon mount Zion, which no ravenous beast was allowed to approach, and to place her happiness in the presence and fellowship of her God: “Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon; look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lion’s dens, from the mountains of leopards.”

The Bear.

The bear is occasionally found in company with the lion in the writings of the Old Testament; and if the savage ferocity of his disposition be duly considered, certainly forms a proper associate for that destroyer. “There came a lion and

bear," said the son of Jesse, "and took a lamb out of the flock;" and Solomon unites them, to constitute the symbol of a wicked magistrate: "As a roaring lion, and a ranging bear, so is a wicked ruler over the poor people*." The savage, which in these texts is associated with the lion, is the brown or red bear. Natural historians mention two other species, the white and black, the dispositions and habits of which are entirely different. The white bear differs in shape from the others, is an inhabitant of the polar regions, and feeds "on the bodies of seals, whales, and other monsters of the deep." It is properly a sea bear, and must have been totally unknown to the inspired writers, who lived so far remote from those dreary and desolate shores which it frequents. The black and the brown bears are considered by many as only varieties of the same species; but their temper and manners are so different, that Buffon, and other respectable writers, contend, that they ought to be regarded as specifically different. The brown or red bear is both a larger animal than the black, and a beast of prey that in strength and ferocity scarcely yields to the lion himself; while the black bear chiefly subsists on roots, fruits, and vegetables, and is never known to prey upon other animals. This species uniformly flies from the presence of men, and never attacks them but in self-defence; but the red bear is a bold and extremely mischievous animal, which will attack a man with equal indifference as a lamb or a fawn. The black bear also confines himself to the more temperate northern latitudes, never ascending to the arctic circle, nor descending lower than the Alps, where it is sometimes found; but the brown bear accommodates himself to every clime, and is to be found in every desert or uncultivated country on the face of our globe. He ranges the Scythian wilds as far as the shores of the frozen ocean; he infests the boundless forests of America; he traverses the burning wastes of Lybia and Numidia, countries of Africa which supplied the ancient Romans with bears to be exhibited at their public

* Prov. xxviii, 15.

spectacles; he prowls on the glowing sands of Arabia; he lounges on the banks of the Nile *, and on the shores of the Red sea; he inhabits the wilderness adjoining to the Holy land †. Hence, the black bear must have been unknown to the inhabitants of Canaan; while the red bear infested their country, prowled around their flocks, and watched near their dwellings, affording them but too many opportunities of studying his character, and too much reason to remember his manners.

A particular description of this animal is to be found in every work on natural history; our concern is only with those traits in his character, which serve to illustrate the sacred writings. His external appearance is unusually rugged and savage; his limbs are strong and thick; his forefeet somewhat resemble the human hand; his hair is shaggy and coarse, and his whole aspect dull and heavy. His motions are as awkward as his shape is clumsy; but under this forbidding exterior, he conceals a considerable degree of alertness and cunning. If hunger compel him to attack a man, or one of the larger animals, he watches the moment when his adversary is off his guard. In pursuit of his prey, he swims with ease the broad and rapid stream, and climbs the highest tree in the forest. Many beasts of prey surpass him in running; yet his speed is so great, that a man on foot can seldom escape. Hence, the danger to which a person is exposed from his pursuit, is extreme; he can scarcely hope to save himself by flight; the interposing river can give him no security; and the loftiest tree in the forest is commonly the chosen dwelling of his pursuer, which, so far from affording him a safe retreat, only insures his destruction. The danger of the victim, which the bear has marked for destruction, is increased by his natural sagacity, the keenness of his eye, and the excellency of his other senses, particularly his sense of smelling, which Buffon conjectures, from the peculiar structure of the organ, to be perhaps more ex-

* Buffon.

† Thevenot.

quisite than that of any other animal. Nor can any hope be rationally entertained from the forbearance or generosity of his temper; to these, or any other amiable quality, his rugged and savage heart is an entire stranger. His anger, which is easily excited, is at once capricious and intense. A dark and sullen scowl, which, on his forbidding countenance never relaxes into a look of satisfaction, indicates the settled moroseness of his disposition; and his voice, which is a deep murmur, or rather growl, often accompanied with a grinding of the teeth, betrays the discontent which reigns within. It is therefore with justice, that the inspired writers uniformly number him among the most ferocious and dangerous tenants of the forest, and associate his name and manners, with the sorest judgments which afflict mankind.

The peculiar form of his anterior feet, was remarked by David in his address to Saul: "The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw, or hand, of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine." The original term, it must be admitted, is of very general import; but in its application to the bear, ought to be literally interpreted, because the forefoot of the bear somewhat resembles the human hand, and is often used as a hand by that animal. When he finds fruit which he relishes, he climbs the tree, sits astride on a branch, with one hand keeps himself firm, and with the other collects the fruit*. The paw of the bear, is distinguished by terms which have the same meaning, in the most celebrated writings of Greece and Rome; Aristotle says, the feet of a bear resemble hands; and Oppian, the hands of a bear resemble the hands of a man, and his feet the feet of a man;

Χειρας χειρσι βρωτων ικελαι, ποδες ηδε ποδεσσι.

Ælian observes, that he remains without meat or drink forty days, and it suffices him in the mean time (την αυτης δεξιαν περιλιχμασθαι) to lick his right hand. Ovid, in his Meta-

* Buffon.

morphoses, and Pliny in his Natural History, style it *Manus*, a hand. Thus, to the strength and ferocity of the lion and the leopard, he adds the important faculty of seizing the prey with his hand, and rendering escape more difficult.

The sacred writer also alludes to the grumbling mournful sound of his voice, when he introduces the ancient church as dissatisfied with herself for her wickedness, and deploring the wretched state to which it had reduced her: "We roar," or rather as Lowth translates it, we groan, all "like bears, and mourn sore like doves; we look for judgment, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far from us*." In ages long posterior, Horace celebrates in these lines the mournful tones of the bear:

"Nec vespertinus circumgemit ursus ovile." *Epod. 16.*

The fretful and discontented temper of the bear, when roused by hunger, or irritated by danger, often breaks out into the most violent rage, under the impulse of which he makes terrible havoc among the flocks and herds, and resolutely attacks the keepers themselves. At such a time to encounter his fury, is almost to rush upon certain destruction.

———"rabide nec perditus ore

Fumantem nasum vivi tentaveris ursi."

Martial.

Naturally intrepid, or at least indifferent to danger, he is then extremely formidable. To flee from a ravenous lion, therefore, and meet a ranging bear, is to escape from one danger, only to encounter another equally great. "Hence, the prophet Amos, who was bred a herdsman, and must have been well acquainted with the dangers to be apprehended from this strong and furious animal, uses this as a proverbial expression, not only of the succession of calamities with which the ungodly Israelites were to be afflicted, but also to intimate, that the removal of one evil, instead of bettering their circumstances, would only be making way for the approach of another as bad: 'Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord;' that you

* Isa. lix. 11.

may know the worst you have to suffer, or as if the threatened evil will never be inflicted; ‘to what end is it for you? The day of the Lord is darkness, and not light.’ The calamity will neither be so slight, nor so transient, as ye presumptuously imagine, but a succession of calamities, all of them grievous, and of which you will be unable to discover any termination: Your case will be, as if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him*.”

The manner in which the bear combats his enemy, is peculiar to himself. While the lion springs upon the victim with a tremendous roar, strikes him down with his paw, and tears him in pieces with his claws and teeth; the bear steals upon his prey in silence, and having reached him, rises upon his hind legs, opens his thick and shaggy arms, and crushes him to death in his horrid embrace. How few have the presence of mind to resist, or the strength to extricate themselves from so great a danger! The name of only one heroic youth is recorded in Scripture, who, by the favour of Jehovah, vanquished in such close combat that powerful and ruthless enemy. When David kept his father’s sheep, there came a bear and took a lamb out of the flock; and he went out after him and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth. And when, according to his custom, the enraged savage raised himself against him to give him the fatal embrace, the dauntless stripling, relying on the protection of his God, and exerting his own uncommon strength, caught him by the chin, “and smote him, and slew him.” In this incident, we discover no trace of miraculous power; but the manner in which David afterward spoke of it, clearly shews, that such escapes were very rare, and at no time to be expected but from the Divine interposition. “The Lord delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear.”

The bear is not more ferocious than cunning and deceitful. He lies in ambush under the thicket, or in the skirts of the fo-

* Sac. Zool. Christ. Mag. vol. 6, p. 573.

rest, to seize the unwary passenger ; he watches the favourable moment of attack, when the intended victim is off his guard ; and steals in silence upon him. If his approach is discovered, and a stout resistance threatened, he retires to his covert, frequently looking back, as if expecting to be pursued *. To this artful management, the prophet evidently refers, in his complaint of the suddenness and severity of divine judgments : “ He was unto me as a bear lying in wait, and as a lion in secret places†.” The wrath of Jehovah came suddenly and unexpectedly on his country and himself, and with great rapidity and violence, like a bear, that rushing, from the forest, in a moment surprises and overpowers the unsuspecting prey.

But he acts this wary part only at certain seasons of the year, when he is permitted to range at large, or in those places where game is plenty. When he first goes abroad, after the dreadful rigours of a polar winter, during which he has been compelled to subsist, as Buffon admits, by sucking his paws, or where the deserts afford him but a scanty supply of food, he attacks his prey with open violence, and terrible rage. Fierce and savage, in proportion to the craving of his voracious appetite, he forsakes his usual haunts, and pursuing the natives by their scent, frequently comes upon them unawares, and sacrifices them to his fierceness and hunger‡. Equally dangerous is the cruel oppressor to those that are exposed to his depredations : “ As a roaring lion and a ranging bear, so is a wicked ruler over the poor people§.” A more formidable enemy never disturbs their habitations ; no sentiment of pity and compassion softens his bosom ; no principle of justice and equity regulates or influences his conduct ; complaint only provokes him to further exactions ; resistance kindles his fierce and unfeeling heart into savage fury, which no supplications can mitigate, no submissions appease. Poor and miserable indeed are the people whom the anger of heaven has placed under his government, rather subjected to his misrule, and bent under

* Lewis and Clarke's Trav.

† Lam. iii. 10.

‡ Cook's Voy.

§ Prov. xxviii. 15.

his unsupportable oppressions ! If the vigour of their own arm, supported by the justice of their cause, is insufficient to procure them relief and safety, they have no resource but in the special favour of heaven; no refuge but in the darkness and silence of the grave.

Still more fierce and terrible than the male, is the female bear, after she has brought forth her young. Animated by the tenderest attachment to her cubs, and extremely jealous for their safety, she suffers neither man nor beast to disturb their repose. This important circumstance, the prophet Isaiah has introduced, with admirable skill and propriety, into the striking picture he has given of the change produced in the most savage and ungovernable hearts by the gospel, and of the peace and concord which shall prevail over all the world under the reign of Messiah. "The cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together." The most ferocious animals, laying aside their native fierceness and cruelty, shall associate in peace with those gentle defenceless creatures on which they were accustomed to prey. The bear shall offer no violence, meditate no mischief, to the cow; and the cow shall entertain no suspicion of the temper or designs of the bear. Even maternal fear and jealousy shall cease to alarm or enrage; the cow shall see, without concern, her young one reposing with the cubs of the bear; and this outrageous animal, softened into forbearance and kindness, permitting the calf in peace and safety, to gambol around her thicket, or lie down with her cubs. Such is the wonderful change which holy prophets and apostles have promised in the name of the Lord, to the church and the world, when his gospel shall be preached to all nations, and his Spirit shall be poured upon all flesh. The blissful event approaches rapidly, and shall ere long fully reward "the faith and patience of the saints."

But the furious passions of the female bear never mount so high, nor burn so fiercely, as when she happens to be deprived of her young. When she returns to her den, and misses the

objects of her love and care, she becomes almost frantic with rage. Disregarding every consideration of danger to herself, she attacks, with intense ferocity, every animal that comes in her way, "and in the bitterness of her heart, will dare to attack even a band of armed men." The Russians of Kamtchatka never venture to fire on a young bear when the mother is near; for, if the cub drop, she becomes enraged to a degree little short of madness; and if she get sight of the enemy, will only quit her revenge with her life*." "A more desperate attempt, therefore, can scarcely be performed, than to carry off her young in her absence. The moment she returns, and misses them, her passions are inflamed; her scent enables her to track the plunderer; and unless he has reached some place of safety before the infuriated animal overtake him, his only safety is in dropping one of the cubs, and continuing to flee; for the mother, attentive to its safety, carries it home to her den, before she renews the pursuit†."

These statements furnish an admirable illustration of a passage in the counsel of Hushai to Absalom, in which he represents the danger of attacking David and his followers with so small a force as twelve thousand chosen men, when their tried courage was inflamed, and their spirits were embittered by the variety and severity of their sufferings, and when their caution, matured by long and extensive experience in the art of war, and sharpened by the novelty and peril of their circumstances, would certainly lead them to anticipate, and take measures to defeat the attempt. "Hushai said unto Absalom, The counsel that Ahitophel hath given, is not good at this time; for (said Hushai) thou knowest thy father and his men, that they be mighty men, and they be chafed in their minds as a bear robbed of her whelps in the field‡." The frantic rage of the female bear, when she has lost her young, gives wonderful energy to the proverb of Solomon: "Let a bear robbed of her

* Cook's Voyages.

† Sac. Zool. Ch. Mag. vol. 6. p. 379.

‡ 2 Sam. xvii. 7, 8.

whelps meet a man, rather than a fool in his folly *." Dreadful as it is to meet a bear in such circumstances, it is yet more dangerous to meet "a fool in his folly," a furious and revengeful man, under the influence of his impetuous passions, and his heart determined on their immediate gratification. Naturally stubborn and cruel as the bear, and equally devoted to his lusts as she is to her young, he pursues them with equal fury and eagerness. It is possible to escape the vengeance of a bereaved bear, by surrendering part of the litter, and diverting her pursuit; but no considerations of interest or duty, no partial gratifications, can arrest his furious career or divert his attention. Reason, degraded and enslaved, lends all her remaining wisdom and energy to passion, and renders the fool more cruel and mischievous than the bear, in proportion as she is superior to instinct. When the prophet Hosea foretold the dreadful calamities that were coming upon the ten tribes for their inveterate and diversified wickedness, he alludes to the same facts: "I will meet them as a bear that is bereaved of her whelps, and will rent the caul of their heart †." Provoked by their numerous and aggravated iniquities, I will pour out upon them the fierceness of my wrath, till as a nation they are utterly destroyed. And none of his words were suffered to fall to the ground: Not long after, the armies of Assyria invaded the country, and carried the miserable inhabitants that remained from the sword, into a long and painful captivity.

Some writers contend, that the allusion in these texts, is not to the female bear, but to the male; because the words, *of her whelps*, are a supplement; and consequently a literal translation would run, I will meet them as a bear bereaved; and because both the noun and its adjective are in the masculine form, and as the male bear is not known to have any remarkable attachment to his young, they explain it of the he-bear when bereaved of the female. It must be admitted, that the bear, like many other animals, is more fierce and dangerous in

* Prov. xvii. 12.

† Hos. xiii. 8.

the rutting season than at other times ; but this is not a sufficient reason to deviate from the common interpretation, which is by far the most emphatical and significant. In that season, the bear is not more dangerous than the lion or the tiger ; why then is he selected, for that the inspired writer alludes to him designedly and emphatically, cannot be doubted? But, if the Spirit of God allude to the female bear, the reason of the preference is obvious ; her fierceness and rage, when deprived of her cubs, scarcely admit of comparison with the passions of the lioness, or any other beast of prey.

The argument drawn from the form of the noun, is of no force, for the original term, although in the masculine form, is of the common gender. It is accordingly connected at one time with the masculine, and at another with the feminine form of the verb. An instance of its connection with the feminine form, and by consequence, of its reference to the female bear, occurs in the passage of Scripture which mentions the destruction of the children of Bethel by two bears *. It may perhaps be replied, that the masculine form of the adjective determines the gender and meaning of the substantive ; but this is not always the case in Hebrew. It has been justly observed, that the adjective “ bereaved may be expressed in the masculine form, in conformity to the termination of the noun with which it is connected, rather than to indicate the sex of the animal.” But a more satisfactory reason may perhaps be assigned : The Hebrews often connect a masculine verb or adjective with a feminine noun, when they mean to indicate something peculiarly excellent, or to increase the force and significancy of the clause, and the reverse ; the adjective here may therefore be put in the masculine form, to signify the total loss which the bear had suffered, and by consequence, that she was wrought up to the highest paroxysm of rage and madness. In the same manner would Jehovah, provoked in the highest degree by the total apostacy of the ten tribes to

* 2 Kings ii. 23, 34.

the service of dumb idols, meet them in the severest calamities which his righteous indignation inflicts upon a guilty and impenitent people.

We have not perhaps in the records of history, a more terrible illustration of the dreadful ferocity which marks the character of the she-bear, than was exhibited in the neighbourhood of Bethel. The prophet Elisha, we are told, after the ascension of his master into heaven, and having received a double portion of his spirit, was returning from Jericho to that place. "And as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head, go up, thou bald head. And he turned back, and cursed them in the name of the Lord; and there came forth two she-bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them."

These furious animals were she-bears, which, it is probable, had been just deprived of their young; and now following the impulse of their outraged feelings, they rushed from the wood to revenge the loss. But it is evident their native ferocity was overruled and directed by divine providence, to execute the dreadful sentence pronounced by the prophet in his name. They must, therefore, be considered as the ministers of God, the Judge of all the earth, commissioned to punish the idolatrous inhabitants of Bethel and their profligate offspring, who probably acted on this occasion with their concurrence, if not by their command. He punished in a similar way the Heathen colonies planted by the king of Assyria in the cities of Samaria, after the expulsion of the ten tribes: "They feared not the LORD; therefore the LORD sent lions among them, which slew some of them*." When he punished the youths of Bethel (for so the phrase *little children* signifies in Hebrew), by directing against them the rage of the she-bears, he only did what Moses had long before predicted, and left on record for their warning: "And if ye walk contrary unto me, and will not hearken unto me, I will bring seven times more

* ? Kings xvii. 25.

plagues upon you, according to your sins. I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children *." Bethel had been long a principal seat of idolatry, and its attendant vices; and to all their aggravated crimes, its inhabitants now added rude and impious mockery of a person whom they knew to be a prophet of the Lord, reviling, with blasphemous tongues, the Lord God of Elijah, and his now glorified servant. Their crime, therefore, justly merited the severest punishment †.

The only other passage of Scripture which takes notice of the bear, occurs in the book of Daniel: "And behold, another beast, a second like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it, between the teeth of it; and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh ‡." It has been satisfactorily proved by the best writers on the subject, that the vision refers to the four great monarchies, the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Macedonian or Grecian, and the Roman; and that the second beast, which was like to a bear, symbolizes the empire of the Medes and Persians. All the four monarchies are represented by beasts of prey, to intimate their agreement in the general character of fierceness and rapacity; and by beasts of different species, to intimate the existence of important differences in their character and mode of operation. The Babylonish empire is symbolized by a lion with eagle's wings, because it was the first and noblest kingdom upon earth; it was strong and fierce as a lion; it was swift and rapid in its movements, as a lion with eagle's wings; rising in a few years under the conduct of Nebuchadnezzar, to the highest pinnacle of power and greatness. The third kingdom is represented by another beast, "like a leopard which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four

* Lev. xxvi. 21, 22.

† See an excellent reply to the cavils of unbelievers against the prophet and his God, in the *Christ. Mag. Sac. Zool.* vol. 6. p. 415.

‡ Dan. vii. 5.

heads; and dominion was given unto it." This is the Grecian monarchy; the distinguishing characters of which, are great variety of disposition and manners, undaunted boldness, and rapidity of conquest, never before or since exemplified in the history of nations. The fourth beast was so great and horrible, that no adequate name could be found for it; this nondescript was the symbol of the Roman empire, which differed from all others in the form of its government, in strength, in power, in greatness, in length of duration; and in extent of dominion. The Persian monarchy, symbolized by the bear, has also certain specific differences, which are to be learned from the natural history of that animal. Cruel and rapacious as the others, the bear is inferior in strength and courage to the lion, and although slower in its motions, more uniform in its appearance, and steady in its purpose than the leopard. Such was the empire of the Medes and Persians: weaker and less warlike than the Babylonian, whose symbol is the lion; but less various in its principles of government, in the forms which it assumed, in the customs and manners of the nations which composed it, and less rapid in its conquests, than the Macedonian, symbolized by the spotted leopard, one of the most rapid and impetuous animals that traverse the desert.

But if the bear is inferior to the lion and the leopard, in strength, in courage, and in swiftness, it surpasses them in ferocious cruelty and insatiable voracity; it thirsts for blood and riots in carnage; and such was the empire of the Medes and Persians. They are stigmatized by ancient historians, as the greatest robbers and spoilers, that ever oppressed the nations. The symbol of this all devouring people, is accordingly represented as having "three ribs in the mouth of it, between the teeth of it," in the very act of devouring three weaker animals which it had seized, that is, of oppressing the kingdoms of Babylon, Lydia, and Egypt, which it conquered. And besides, to denote its rapaciousness and cruelty, it is added in the vision, that "they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh."

The fourth empire is symbolized by "a dreadful and terrible beast," for which, the prophet found no name in the kingdom of nature. It resembled the fabulous monsters, which poetic imagination sometimes delights to pourtray; for, in the book of Revelation, John describes it as compounded of the three which preceded it: "The beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion*." It possessed all the qualities which render beasts of prey a terror to man and other animals; the swiftness and cunning of the leopard, the ferocity of the bear, and the boldness and strength of the lion. The Roman empire which it symbolized, resembled no state of society known among men; it displayed, in its character and proceedings, the vigour and courage of the Babylonians, the various policy and alacrity of the Greeks, and the unchanging firmness of the Medes and Persians; qualities which have been equally conspicuous in the Papal state of that empire.

The Wolf.

This animal is not often alluded to by the sacred writers; but in the few references which occur, his character is strongly and justly drawn. Nature has furnished him with cunning, strength, and agility, to discover, to seize, and to devour his prey. Though naturally clownish and dastardly, want makes him ingenious, and necessity gives him courage. When pressed with famine, he braves danger; he attacks those animals which are under the protection of man, especially those which he can transport with ease, as lambs, small dogs, and kids; and when successful in his bloody expeditions, he returns often to the charge, till the vigorous opposition of men and dogs force him to his den†. The dying patriarch, Jacob, ascribed to his youngest son, the rapacity of this animal; "Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil‡." The wolf is weaker than the lion or the bear, and less courageous than the leopard;

* Rev. xiii. 2.

† Buffon.

‡ Gen. xlix. 27.

but he scarcely yields to them in cruelty and rapaciousness. So Benjamin, although not destitute of courage and address, nor disinclined to war, possessed neither the strength, nor the manly spirit of Judah, whose symbol was the lion's whelp; but yet he was greedy of blood, he delighted in rapine, and in the early periods of Jewish history, he distinguished himself by an active and restless spirit, which commonly, like the wolf among lambs and kids, spent itself in petty or inglorious warfare, although it sometimes blazed forth in deeds of heroic valour, and general utility. He had the honour of giving the second judge to the nation of Israel, who delivered them from the oppressive yoke of Moab; and the first king that sat on the throne of that chosen people, whose valour saved them from the iron sceptre of Ammon, and more than once revenged the barbarities of the uncircumcised Philistines upon their discomfited hosts. In the decline of the Jewish commonwealth, Esther and Mordecai, who were both of this tribe, successfully interposed with the king of Persia, for the deliverance of their brethren, and took their station in the first rank of public benefactors. But the tribe of Benjamin ravened like wolves, when they desperately espoused the cause of Gibeah, and in the dishonourable and bloody feud, reduced their own tribe to the very brink of ruin, and inflicted a deep wound on the other members of the state.

The rapacious character of the wolf was familiarly known to the ancients, for both the Greek and Latin poets frequently mention it. In the first book of the Georgics, Virgil says, this office was given to the wolf by Jupiter, to hunt the prey.

“*Prædari que lupos jussit.*”

The rapacious wolf, is a phrase which often occurs in the odes of Horace :

“*Cervi luporum præda rapacium.*”

And Ovid, in one of his Elegies, sings, how the wolf, rapacious and greedy of blood, when pressed by famine, plunders the unguarded fold.

“ Utque rapax, stimulante fame cupidusque cruoris

Incustoditum captat ovile lupus.” 5 *El. b. 1.*

His ravenous temper prompts him to destructive and sanguinary depredations. He issues forth in the night, traverses the country, roams about the cottages, kills all the animals which have been left without, digs the earth under the doors, enters with a dreadful ferocity, and puts every living creature to death, before he chooses to depart, and carry off his prey. When these inroads happen to be fruitless, he returns to the woods, searches about with avidity, follows the tract of wild beasts, and pursues them in the hope that they may be stopped and seized by some other wolf, and that he may be a partaker of the spoil. When his hunger is extreme, he loses the idea of fear; he attacks women and children, and even sometimes darts upon men; till, becoming perfectly furious by excessive exertions, he generally falls a sacrifice to pure rage and distraction. He has been accordingly joined with the lion in executing punishment upon wicked men; and it is evident from his character and habits, that he is well adapted to the work of judgment: “The great men,” said Jeremiah, “have altogether broken the yoke, and burst the bonds; wherefore a lion out of the forest shall slay them, and a wolf of the evenings shall spoil them*.” The rapacious and cruel conduct of the princes of Israel, is compared by Ezekiel to the mischievous inroads of the same animal: “Her princes in the midst thereof, are like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood, to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain†.” The dispositions of the wolf to attack the weaker animals, especially those which are under the protection of man, is alluded to by our Lord in the parable of the hireling shepherd: “The wolf catches them and scatters the flock‡;” and the apostle Paul, in his address to the elders of Ephesus, gives the name of this insidious and cruel animal, to the false teachers who disturbed the peace, and perverted the faith of their people: “I know this, that after my

* Jer. v. 6,

† Ezek. xxii. 27.

‡ Mat. vii. 15.

departing, shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock *."

The Jewish rulers, in the time of the prophet Zephaniah, manifested the same disposition, and were branded with the same stigma: "Her princes within her are roaring lions, her judges are evening wolves; they gnaw not the bones till the morrow †." Instead of protecting the innocent, and restraining the evil doer, or punishing him according to the demerit of his crimes, they delight in violence and oppression, in blood and rapine, and so insatiable is their cupidity, that, like the evening wolf, they destroy more than they are able to possess: "they gnaw not the bones till the morrow;" or, so much do they delight in carnage, that they reserve the bones till next day for a sweet repast. The insatiable cupidity of this animal, has not escaped the observation of classic authors. Ovid sings, in the second book of his *Fausti*, "*Sæpe avidum fugiens restitet agna lupum.*" And to compare an insatiable oppressor to the wolf, was not uncommon among the ancients; thus, Mithridates says of the Romans, that they had the disposition of wolves: "*Inexplebiles sanguinis atque imperii divitiarum que avidos ac jejunos.*"

The wolf is an enemy to all society, and keeps no company even with those of his own species. It was the opinion of some ancient writers, however, that he sometimes admits a single associate in his predatory excursions; only one proof shall be quoted from Statius, who says they go forth in pairs.

———"procedunt gemini, ceu fœdere juncto

Hyberna sub nocte lupi."

But when a large animal, a stag, an ox, or a formidable mastiff, is to be attacked, or when some danger is to be feared, they form a league, according to the poet, and issue forth in bands to seek the prey: and on these occasions, if Xenophon is worthy of credit, some keep off the shepherds, and some carry away the booty.

* Acts xx. 29.

† Zeph. iii. 3.

τῆς μὲν ἀπελᾶναι τὴν φυλακὴν, τῆς δὲ ἀρπαῖζειν.

The myrmidons in Homer, resembled a band of “carnivorous wolves, whose hearts were inflamed by invincible courage, that tear in pieces, and devour a large horned stag, which they had killed in the mountains; and their jaws are dyed in blood; then they go off in a body to drink at the dark fountain, with their slender tongues, belching forth the swallowed gore.”

Καὶ τ’ ἁγελῆδον ἰασιν, ἀπο κρηνῆς μελανύδρου. *Il. b. 16. l. 156, &c.*

This predatory expedition is no sooner finished, than they separate, and each returns in silence to his den. To the occasional combination of these animals, the inspired writer probably alludes in a passage already quoted: “her judges are evening wolves;” selfish and solitary in their natural dispositions, but associated for a time, that they may prosecute with more success their schemes of rapine and extortion.

Weaker than many other beasts of prey, and proportionably timid, the wolf generally chooses to conceal his movements under the veil of night; this is indeed common to all the beasts of prey, but is more proper to him than to the lion, the bear, or the leopard. It is for this reason, the sacred writers emphatically call him the “wolf of the evening;” and Virgil sings how he lies in ambush for a full cote of sheep, growling at the folds, enduring winds and rains at the hours of midnight.

——“pleno lupus insidiatus ovili,” &c. *Æn. b. 9. l. 60.*

In the prophecies of Habakkuk, the Assyrian “horses are fiercer than the evening wolves.” This expression some refer to their speed, others to the acuteness of their sight; the celebrated Bochart supposes, that since the wolf is very swift, and sharp sighted also, the prophet might have respect to both. But he rather inclines to the common opinion, that the inspired writer alludes to the keenness of his temper, which is expressed in our translation with sufficient propriety. The Assyrian horses were fiercer, keener, or more high spirited, than wolves that come abroad in the evening, pinched with hunger, and eager for the chase. The prophet, by using the comparative

degree, admits, that both the horse and the wolf are keen or fierce; and in the same manner Virgil applies the term to both.

———“et genus acre luporum.” *Geor. b. 3.*

And in the *Æneid*:

———“Ascanius mediis in vallibus acri

Gaudet equo.”

In the sacred writings, the wolf is every where opposed to sheep and goats, as if his cruelty and rage were reserved especially for these creatures. Thus, our Lord informs his disciples: “Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves;” and in one of his discourses to the Pharisees, “But he that is an hireling --- seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth; and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.” The prophet Isaiah seems to lead our attention to the same circumstance, when he describes the wonderful change which is to take place in the world, under the benign influence of the gospel: “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb,” and near the close of his prophecy: “the wolf and the lamb shall feed together *.” The son of Sirach takes up the same idea, and inquires, What communion can be between a wolf and a lamb? In Homer, the wolves are described as rushing with impetuous violence upon the lambs or the kids, making great havock, carrying away from the flocks, those which have been dispersed in the mountains by the folly of the shepherd.

Ὅς δὲ λύκοι ἀρνέσσιν ἐπεχρῶσιν ἢ ἐριφοῖσι. *Il. b. 16. l. 352. &c.*

And Virgil says, the wolf is fatal to the flocks, as showers of rain to ripened corn, and shaking winds to trees.

“Triste lupus stabulis.” *3 Ecl. l. 80.*

But, it is probable, that the hostility of the wolf to the flock or the herd, arises from no particular hatred which he bears to them, but because he finds them an easier prey than the greater part of other animals.

His strength is so great, that he carries a sheep in his

* Isa. lxxv. 25.

mouth, and at the same time outruns the shepherds. His bite is cruel, and always more obstinate in proportion to the smallness of the resistance; for when an animal can defend himself, he is cautious and circumspect. Although timid, he is ferocious; and so hardy and robust, that he runs and roams about whole days and nights in quest of his prey. He prefers living to dead animals; but when he can find nothing better, he devours the most putrid carcases. Human flesh is grateful to his taste, and if stronger, he would perhaps eat no other. Wolves have been known to follow armies, to come in troops to the field of battle, where bodies are carelessly interred, to tear them up, and to devour them with an insatiable avidity; and when once accustomed to human flesh, these wolves ever after attack men; prefer the shepherd to the flock; devour women, and carry off children. So mischievous, so dangerous are these creatures, that whole countries are sometimes obliged to arm for their destruction. These facts illustrate the force and beauty of a passage in the prophecies of Isaiah, to which reference has more than once been made, where he describes the tranquil and prosperous state of the world and the church, under the reign of Messiah: "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid." That insidious creature shall be divested of its native cunning, fierceness, and cruelty, which render it an object of terror and disgust, even to the human kind, and shall associate in peace with the lamb, upon which it was accustomed to prey, as harmless, and as little to be feared, as that inoffensive creature. Or to drop the metaphor, men of fierce, cruel, and rapacious dispositions, shall, by the preaching of the gospel, and the power of divine grace, be transformed into humble, gentle, and peaceful disciples of Jesus; and shall no more vex and harass one another, or injure the church of Christ, but quietly live together in the same religious society, united in the strictest bonds of peace and friendship.

The false teacher is often compared to the wolf, in the holy

Scriptures; and, without straining the metaphor, several points of resemblance may be perceived. "Beware," said our Lord to the multitudes, "beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing;" gentle, unassuming, and harmless in their demeanour and professions, as that inoffensive animal, in whose fleece they are clothed, "but inwardly, are ravening wolves*;" in their temper and secret purposes, deceitful, cruel, and rapacious; and in their conduct, under the covert of candour, moderation, and piety, lying in wait to beguile the unwary soul. Such were the men, concerning whom the apostle warned the elders of the church at Ephesus: "For I know this, that after my departing, shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock†." Covetous and ungodly men, under the character of public teachers, were already watching near the fold, in expectation of his departure, whose vigilance and authority had prevented the accomplishment of their designs, ready to seize the first instance of negligence on the part of the subordinate shepherds, to secure their prey.

That cruel and rapacious animal, is often selected as the appropriate symbol of tyrannical rulers, and bloody persecutors of the good and the worthy. The princes of Jerusalem, in the time of Ezekiel, are compared to "wolves ravening the prey," to shed blood, to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain. A similar complaint was made by another prophet, long before: "Her princes within her are roaring lions," fierce and ravenous, preying upon all around them, feared and hated by the whole community; "her judges," whose office it is to distribute justice with an impartial hand, to protect the weak, and to vindicate the injured, are like "evening wolves," greedy, rapacious, and insatiable; they judge for reward; they grievously oppress the poor and the needy; they intimidate the good, and encourage the wicked, till the bonds of society are at last dissolved, and every place to which their influence reaches, is filled with violence. This miserable state of things the people of Israel more

* Mat. vii. 15.

† Acts xx. 29.

than once experienced, as we know from the testimony of their own prophets, in the decline of their government; and the apostles and other ministers of religion under the present dispensation, have often had to drink of the same cup. These also were sent forth "as sheep in the midst of wolves," and suffered all the injustice and cruelty which the comparison involves. Happy world! when in every land on which the sun shines, the prince shall be a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well; and when the ministers of religion shall be indeed the servants of Christ, spending their days and exhausting their strength, in turning sinners from the error of their way.

The Hyæna.

Modern interpreters have not found this savage beast in the sacred volume. But the celebrated Bochart has undeniably proved, that the term (צבוע) tseboa is sometimes employed by the sacred writers to denote the hyæna. The passage in first Samuel, rendered in our version "the valley of Zebaim," ancient expositors translate, "the valley of Hyænas:" although the Chaldee has "the valley of vipers or basilisks." But our author contends, that in this text it ought to be rendered hyæna; because this name occurs in the Syriac version, and because the Arabians call the hyæna, dsabuon, which is clearly derived from tseboa, and has been gradually changed into dubbah, the name by which, according to Dr Shaw, the hyæna is still known in Barbary. The Hebrews call him tseboa, from the dark strips or streaks with which his colour is variegated. In the same manner, the Greek interpreters, and after them Bochart, render that passage in the prophet, in our version, "Mine heritage is unto me as a speckled bird," (הקעט צבוע), 'Mine heritage is unto me as a hyæna or striped wild beast. Is there a wild beast all around upon her.' In the chapter from which the quotation is taken, Jehovah sharply expostulates with his people, because they had forgotten the favours they had so often received from him, and manifested towards him those fierce and untractable dispositions, which we justly execrate in

beasts of prey. This interpretation is also supposed to be more agreeable to the context. In the preceding verse, the prophet complains in the name of the Lord: "Mine heritage is unto me as a lion in the forest, it crieth out against me, therefore have I hated it;" and in the close of the ninth verse, we have this invitation: "Come ye, assemble all ye beasts of the field, come to devour*." But, contends Bochart, it would certainly be very incongruous to mention a speckled bird among beasts of prey.

This reasoning, however, is unsatisfactory; for by the authority of Bochart himself, a species of serpents is designed by the same name, and that both these animals are so called from the various colours with which their bodies are marked. The use of the name tseboa, therefore, which signifies merely spotted or streaked, determines nothing; it equally applies to beasts, serpents, and birds. To make good his opinion, he is obliged to render עֵט eet a beast, instead of a bird of prey. And why not, says he, since the verb (עָט or עָט) out or eet, belongs not to birds only, but to any animal that rushes on its prey? But if so, then by his own admission, it may be interpreted as in our version, a speckled bird, or bird of prey; and by consequence, neither does the use of this term determine the question. But it remains to be proved, that the words in the Hebrew text belong to any animal that rushes on its prey. This is so far from being the case, that common use, the supreme arbiter in language, has restricted it to birds only; for, it is presumed, no instance can be produced in which the word is used for a beast of prey. "But to shew," continues Bochart, "that the name eet (עֵט) belongs not to birds only, (צִיפור) tsippor a bird, is sometimes added to it diacritically, as in this threatening: "I will give thee unto the ravenous birds †;" (לְעֵיט צִיפור) every (עֵיט) eet not being a bird, but beasts of the ravenous and carnivorous kind, being included in that name. It has been already shewn, that the Hebrew term (עֵט) eet, never signifies a beast of prey; and

* Jer. xii, 8, 9.

† Ezek. xxxix, 4.

Bochart has produced no proof that the word (צִיפור) tsippor is used by the prophet to determine the sense. Nor could he use it in this manner, if it is never applied to beasts; he must therefore use it merely in the way of illustration. The only ambiguous term here, is (צִבְרִית) tsebouah, striped or speckled, which may denote a bird adorned with variegated plumes, perhaps of the eagle or falcon kind, some of which are beautifully speckled; as it is "attributed to a species of serpent, as well as to the hyæna, for a similar reason;" and accordingly, the generic name הָרֵעִיץ the bird of prey, seems to be added to it for the sake of discrimination. If these remarks be just, the argument derived by our learned author from the incongruity of mentioning a bird of prey among the beasts of the field, must fall to the ground: we must take the Scriptures as they are, without attempting to bend them to our views of propriety. It is not uncommon with the sacred writers to place the ravenous fowls of heaven and the beasts of the field in the same sentence. Thus the prophet Ezekiel threatens Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: "I will give thee unto the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the field to be devoured *:" and the arrangements of Providence correspond with the words of the prophet; for both the birds and the beasts of prey are jointly commissioned by Heaven to execute his vengeance on his guilty creatures. But, what is not a little remarkable, the very arrangement which our author blames, and from which he endeavours to extract an argument in support of his opinion, is adopted by another prophet in a passage which he has overlooked: "They shall be left together unto the fowls of the mountains, and to the beasts of the earth; and the fowls shall summer upon them, and all the beasts of the earth shall winter upon them†." In the verse under consideration, the word הָרֵעִיץ in the second clause, must be admitted to signify birds of prey; and this furnishes a strong presumption, that in the first clause it bears the same sense. This presumption is consider-

* Ezek. xxxix. 4.

† Isa. xviii. 6.

ably strengthened by the context. In the preceding verse, Jehovah had complained that his people had acted towards him "as a lion," a particular species of wild beast ; in this he is supposed to compare their behaviour to that of a bird of prey, equally fierce and rapacious : hence, he calls in return upon other ravenous creatures, birds as well as beasts, to come forward and avenge his cause : "Come, ye birds of prey that are round about her, assemble all ye beasts of the field, come to devour."

The Fox.

The fox is not a vagabond like the wolf, and other beasts of prey, wandering in the desert without any certain place of rest ; he lives in a settled domestic state, and knows well where to choose the situation of his dwelling, and how to make it safe and commodious. He digs his abode at the entrance of a wood, and if possible, within hearing of the hamlet, where the game is plenty ; and at the bottom of a rock, or among the roots of trees, where he cannot be uncovered. But he does not always submit to the labour of digging his own habitation ; when he lights upon the hole of a badger, in a proper situation, he places himself at the entrance, and keeps out the rightful owner ; or if the badger be within, and cannot be dislodged by force, he compels him to retire by the offensive smell of his ordure, with which, in this case, he takes care to pollute the mouth of the den. When the badger is expelled, he takes possession, and fits it up for his own accommodation. Here he is more comfortably lodged than was the Saviour of sinners, when he dwelt with men : "The foxes," said the Man of sorrows, "the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests ; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head*." To save his people from their sins, he was not content with submitting to be despised and rejected of men, to make himself of no reputation, and move in the humblest walk of life ; so great was his love and condescension, that he denied himself many comforts, which,

* Mat. viii. 20.

as the creator and preserver of all things, he bestows on the beasts of the field and the fowls of heaven.

The fox knows how to suit himself to circumstances; when he has no habitation under ground, or cannot find one to his liking, a ruined tower or a deserted house, at a convenient distance from the inhabited country, affords him a shelter. This circumstance is beautifully remarked in the Lamentations of Jeremiah: "For this our heart is faint; for these things our eyes are dim, because of the mountain of Zion which is desolate, the foxes walk upon it." That sacred mountain, where the temple stood, whither the tribes of Israel went up at the solemn festivals, where the voice of unnumbered worshippers was daily heard, is now left without a tenant or single visiter, save the solitary fox, which has chosen his retreat in the silent courts, and, undisturbed by the foot of man, walks at his ease in the holy cloisters.

Like other beasts of prey, he is exceedingly voracious; flesh of all kinds is agreeable to his taste; and, like the wolf, he visits the field of battle, to prey upon the dying and the dead. This trait in his character has not escaped the observation of David; for, in the sixty-third psalm, he foretels the destruction of his enemies in these terms: "Those that seek my soul to destroy it, shall go into the lower parts of the earth. They shall fall by the sword; they shall be a portion for foxes." When game fails him, or when the sword has ceased to supply his wants, he devours with equal greediness, honey, fruits, and particularly grapes. In allusion to his eager desire to the fruit of the vine, it is said in the Song of Solomon, "Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes." In Scripture, the church is often compared to a vineyard; her members to the vines with which it is stored; and by consequence, the grapes may signify all the fruits of righteousness, which those mystical vines produce. The foxes that spoil these vines, must therefore mean false teachers, who corrupt the purity of doctrine, obscure the sim-

plicity of worship, overturn the beauty of appointed order, break the unity of believers, and extinguish the life and vigour of Christian practice. These words of Ezekiel may be understood in the same sense: "O Jerusalem! thy prophets, (or as the context clearly proves) thy flattering teachers, are as foxes in the deserts*:" and this name they receive, because, with vulpine subtilty, they speak lies in hypocrisy. Such teachers, the apostle calls "wolves in sheep's clothing;" deceitful workers, who, by their cunning, subvert whole houses; and whose word, like the tooth of a fox upon the vine, eats as a canker.

The book of Judges contains a singular anecdote, of the mischief which Samson did by means of this animal to the property of his enemies. He "went and caught three hundred foxes, and took fire-brands, and turned tail to tail, and put a fire-brand in the midst, between two tails; and when he had set the brands on fire, he let them go into the standing corn of the Philistines, and burnt up both the shocks, and also the standing corn, with the vineyards and olives†." On reading this curious statement, the infidel asks with an air of triumph, How could Samson procure so many foxes in so short a time? To this question it may be answered, that the concurring testimony of travellers, clearly proves, that the land of Promise abounded with foxes. The same fact is suggested by the prediction of David, that his enemies should become the prey of foxes; and by the invitation of Solomon already quoted from the Song‡. Some districts and cities in that country, take their name from the fox; a sure proof of their numbers in those parts: Thus, the land of Shual, mentioned in the first book of Samuel, signifies the land of the fox§;" and Hazar-shual, the name of a city, belonging to the tribe of Judah, or Simeon, means the fox's habitation||. Besides, the term foxes, in the opinion of Bochart, embraces the thoes, a species of wolf, which very much resemble the fox, and are ex-

* Ezek. xiii. 4.

† Jud. xv. 4.

‡ Song ii. 15.

§1 Sam. xiii. 17.

|| Josh. xv. 28, and xix. 3.

tremely numerous in Judea, particularly about Cæsarea. Belonius asserts, that they may be seen in troops of two or three hundred, prowling about in quest of their prey : and Morizon, who travelled in Palestine, says, that foxes swarm in that country, and that very great numbers of them lurk in hedges and in ruinous buildings. To find so many of these animals, therefore, could be no great difficulty to a person accustomed to the chase, as this renowned Israelite may be reasonably supposed to have been. Nor is it said, that Samsom caught all these foxes in one, or even in two days ; a whole week, or even a month, might be spent in the capture, for any thing that appears to the contrary. Add to this, that, although Samson himself might be a most expert hunter, we have no reason to think he caught all these animals alone. So eminent a personage as the chief magistrate of Israel, might employ as many people as he pleased, in accomplishing his purpose. When, for example, it is said, that Solomon built the temple at Jerusalem, no man supposes, that he executed the work with his own hands ; he only caused the work to be done : and, in the same manner, Samson may be said to do what he only commanded to be done, or assisted in doing. Nor can it be reasonably denied, that the God who made the world, and by his special providence, watched over the prosperity of his ancient people, and intended at this time, to deliver them from their enemies, could easily dispose matters, so as to facilitate or secure the capture of as many foxes, as the design of Samson required.

In this singular stratagem, he is thought by some writers, to have had two things in view ; at once, to deliver his country from those noxious animals, and to do the greatest possible mischief to his enemies. No kind of animals could be more suited to his purpose, especially when coupled together in this manner ; for they run long and swiftly, not in a direct line, but with many windings, so that, while they dragged in opposite directions, they spread the fire over all the fields of the

Philistines with the greater rapidity and success, and were at the same time prevented from getting into the woods, or holes in the rocks, where the fire-brands had been extinguished, and the stratagem rendered ineffectual.

Mr Burder, on this incident, observes, There is reason to think, that there was nothing new or uncommon in this operation, as it was most obvious for the end proposed, that the wit of man could devise. We accordingly find, says he, that Ovid alludes to the practice, and mentions, that foxes and fire-brands were every year exhibited at Rome, and killed in the circus. For it was the custom in many places, to sacrifice by way of retaliation, every animal which did particular injury to the fruits of the earth. In consequence of this, they introduced these foxes, which had been employed for that purpose, with fire-brands.

“Cur igitur missæ vinetis ardentia tædis

Terga ferunt vulpes causa docenda mihi.”

He then mentions an instance of much injury done by a fox so accounted by fire :

“Qua fugit incendit vestitos messibus agros

Damnosis vires ignibus aura dabat.”

On this account, the whole race, according to the poet, were condemned at the festival, called Cerealea, to be in their turns set on fire.

“Utque luat poenas gens hæc Cerealibus ardet,

Quoque modo segetes perdidit ipsa perit.”

The same custom is alluded to, proverbially, more than once, by Lycophron, and seems to have been well known in Greece. He makes Cassandra represent Ulysses as a man, both of cunning and mischief, and styles him very properly, λαμπυρος, a fox with a fire-brand at his tail; for, wherever he went, mischief followed. Suidas also takes notice of this custom, when he speaks of a kind of beetle, which the Boeotians named tipha. They imagined, that, if to this they were to fasten some in-

flammable matter, it would be easy to set any thing on fire. He adds, that this was sometimes practised with foxes*.

The coincidence between the practice of Samson and the custom of the Greeks and Romans, is undoubtedly curious and interesting; but it will not prove, as this respectable writer imagines, that the custom was general in the east. In the two first lines quoted from Ovid, the poet says, that when he went from Rome to Peligni, he passed through the town of Carseoli, and there he learned from his host, an old man, that the custom of binding a fire-brand to the tail of a fox, was done in memory of an animal of this species at Carseoli, which a peasant, when he had caught it, wrapped in straw, which he set on fire. The fox fled in the utmost terror; and, wherever he came, burnt down the fields of corn. Now, it cannot be admitted, that so solemn a rite derived its origin from such an obscure beginning. Is it to be supposed, that because a single fox, wrapped in straw at Carseoli, set on fire a few spots of standing corn in his flight, every year, at Rome, on a certain day, a number of foxes were let loose with fire-brands on their tails? The truth seems to be, that the festive custom in Greece and Italy, was borrowed from the Phenicians, the lineal descendants of the Philistines. It is well known to every classical scholar, that many peculiar customs of these two celebrated nations, were imported from Phenicia, where the inhabitants had some reason to commemorate the mischief which Samson's foxes had done to the property of their ancestors. The circumstances of the custom perfectly agree with the device of Samson, but seem to have very little relation to the incident at Carseoli; for the foxes exhibited at Rome were not wrapped in straw, as the fox at Carseoli was, but had the fire-brand bound to their tails, as in the story of Samson; for Ovid sings:

—— “*junctis ardentia tædis*
Terga ferant vulpes.——

* Burder's Oriental Customs, *in loc.*

And it is a most remarkable circumstance, that the foxes were let loose at Rome, not at the time of wheat harvest in Italy, but in Palestine, which falls about the middle of April. Let us hear Ovid himself:

“Sed jam preteritas ubi quartus Lucifer idus,” &c.

The meaning of the passage is, the Hyades fall on the fourth day of the ides of April, that is, on the seventeenth day of that month, or, which is the same thing, on the fifteenth of the kalends of May; and on the third day after, that is, on the twentieth of April, the Curul games are celebrated in the circus, and the foxes are let loose. But this is the time of sowing at Rome, not the time of harvest; for Virgil says,

“Ante tibi Eoæ Atlantides abscondantur

Debita quam sulcis committas semina.”

But, in Egypt and Palestine, it is quite different; for, in those countries, the harvest begins in the month Abib, which answers to our March; and by consequence, on the day after the passover, that is, in the middle of the month Abib or March, the sheaf of the first fruits was according to the law of Moses offered to God. But at the feast of pentecost, fifty days after, the harvest was nearly finished; and for this reason it is called, in the twenty-third chapter of Exodus, the feast of harvest, not of harvest begun, but completed. These two feasts, therefore, the passover and pentecost, included the time of harvest, which began with the first, and ended with the last. The barley harvest came on immediately after the passover; and the wheat harvest succeeded in the middle of April. This then, was the season of the year when Samson, provoked by the conduct of his father-in-law, turned loose the foxes among the standing corn of the Philistines. In this statement, we discover the reason that the sacred historian thus begins his narrative: “And it came to pass within a whole year after, in the time of wheat harvest, that Samson visited his wife with a kid.” Part of the crop was then standing, and part was in the shock. It is therefore extremely probable, that the confla-

gration happened on the very day when the foxes were let loose into the circus, in commemoration of that burning which was first practised among the Phenicians, and afterwards borrowed from them by the Romans.

The fox is celebrated by every natural historian for his address and cunning. What other beasts of prey accomplish by force, he performs by craft, and often with more success. Acute and circumspect, ingenious and prudent, he suits his conduct and operations to existing circumstances, and always reserves some art for unforeseen accidents. In securing his own safety, he is extremely vigilant. Although he possesses more agility and perseverance than the wolf, yet he trusts not entirely to the swiftness of his course, but endeavours to provide for himself an asylum, whither he retires from pressing dangers, where he dwells and brings up his young. On the border of some wood, in the neighbourhood of a cottage, where he commonly fixes his abode, he listens to the shrill voice of the cock, and the crying of the poultry; he scents them at a distance; he chooses his time with judgment; he conceals his road, as well as his design; he steals forward with caution, sometimes even trailing his body, and seldom fails to accomplish his purpose. If he can leap the wall, or get in underneath, he ravages the court-yard, puts all to death, and then retires softly with his prey, which he either hides under the herbage, or carries off to his kennel; he returns in a few minutes for another, which he carries off, or conceals in the same manner, but in a different place. In this way he proceeds till the progress of the sun, or some movements perceived in the house, advertise him, that it is time to suspend his operations, and to retire to his den *. These facts illustrate the propriety of our Lord's reply to those who advised him to flee from the machinations of Herod: "And he said unto them, Go ye and tell that fox, behold I cast out devils, and I do cures to-day, and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected †." Herod was an insidious, crafty, and refined po-

* Buffon.

† Luke xiii. 32.

litician, and a cruel unfeeling prince. He recommended himself with great art to the Jews, by pretending a love for their religion; whilst, intent on his own private interests, he servilely flattered the Roman emperor. It is known to all who are versant in the history of those times, by what arts he seduced the wife of his brother, and with what cruelty and injustice he treated John the Baptist, who reproved him for his incestuous connection. The Herodians, it has been said, were his creatures and spies, who spread themselves over the country, to hear the conversation of the people concerning their master; and were secretly sent to watch the discourses and proceedings of the Saviour. The title of fox, therefore, could not be applied with more propriety to any human character. But although Herod was confessedly artful and cruel as the fox, some have doubted if it was lawful for his subjects, of whom our Lord was one, to reproach him. But since the Saviour did reproach him, it was lawful; for he did always the things which pleased his heavenly Father: and the Spirit of inspiration attests him as the "holy One and the just." To this conclusive reply, may be added, that the objection is founded on the divine right of kings; a doctrine which cannot be sufficiently detested, and which has long been exploded by the most enlightened writers on jurisprudence.

CHAP. IX.

WILD INOFFENSIVE ANIMALS.

The Wild Ass.

THIS animal was called *ονος αγχιος* among the Greeks, and onager by the Romans. Some natural historians consider it

as a different species from the tame and domestic ass; but others, among whom is the celebrated Buffon, affirm, that it differs from its unhappy relation, only in those particulars which are the proper effects of independence and liberty. Although more elegantly shaped, the general form of its body is the same; but in temper and manners it is extremely dissimilar. Intended to fill a higher place in the kingdom of nature, than its abject and enslaved brother, it exhibits endowments, which in all ages have commanded the admiration of every observer. Animated by an unconquerable love of liberty, this high spirited animal submits his neck with great reluctance to the yoke of man; extremely jealous of the least restraint, he shuns the inhabited country, and steadily rejects all the delicacies it has to offer. His chosen haunt is the solitary and inhospitable desert, where he roves at his ease, exulting in the possession of unrestrained freedom. These are not accidental nor acquired traits in his character; but instincts, implanted by the hand of his Maker, that are neither to be extinguished nor modified by length of time, nor change of circumstances. To this wild and untameable temper, Jehovah himself condescends to direct the attention of Job, when he answered him out of the whirlwind, and said: "Who hath sent out the wild ass free? or who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass? whose house I have made the wilderness, and the barren land his dwellings. He scorneth the multitude of the city; neither regardeth he the crying of the driver. The range of the mountains is his pasture, and he searcheth after every green thing*."

The proper name of this animal in the Hebrew language, is פָּרָא, *Phæræ*, a term which, according to some writers, is expressive of its extreme suspicion. It is employed by Moses, to denote the wild and untractable disposition of Ishmael, and his descendants; and by Zophar, to characterise a vain, self-righteous, and obstinate person. In accordance with this idea, the

* Job xxxix. 5.

noun furnishes a verb in the Hiphil form, which signifies to act as wildly as the onager.

Others derive the noun from a Chaldee verb, which signifies to run with great swiftness; and every writer, ancient and modern, who has treated of this animal, has attested the wonderful celerity with which it flies over the desert. According to Leo Africanus, the wild ass yields only to the horses of Barbary; and Xenophon avers in his *Anabasis*, that it outruns the fleetest horses. It has feet like the whirlwind, says Oppian; Ælian asserts, that it seems as if it were carried forward by wings like a bird; and Harmer observes, that it is still supposed by the orientals to surpass all other animals in swiftness*. These testimonies are confirmed by Professor GMELIN, who saw numerous troops of them in the deserts of Great Tartary, and says, The onagers are animals adapted to running, and of such swiftness, that the best horses cannot equal them. Relying on its extraordinary powers, it frequently mocks the pursuit of the hunter; and in the striking description of its Creator, "Scorneth the multitude of the city," that invade its retreats, and seek its destruction. It laughs (as the original term properly signifies) at their numbers and their speed, and seems to take a malicious pleasure in disappointing their hopes. Xenophon states, that the onagers in Mesopotamia, "when pursued on horseback, will stop suddenly in the midst of their career, till the hunters approach, and then dart away with surprising velocity; and again stop, as if inviting them to make another effort to overtake them, but immediately dart away again like an arrow shot from a bow: indeed, it would be impossible for men to take them, without the assistance of art. The hunters, however, often lie in wait for them at the ponds of brackish water, to which they resort to drink; or take them alive by means of concealed pits, half filled with plants and branches of trees, to lessen the creature's fall. At other times the chase is continued by relays of fresh horses,

* Vol. 2. p. 185.

which the hunters mount as the others are exhausted, till the strength of the animal is so completely worn out, that it can be easily overtaken."

The wild ass, unsocial in his temper, and impatient of restraint, frequents the solitary wilderness, and the vast inhospitable desert, the salt marsh, and the mountain range. This is the scene adapted to his nature and instincts, and his proper domain allotted to him by the author of his being. This fact we are not left to infer from the manners and habits of the animal; Jehovah himself has attested it in these terms: "Whose house I have made the wilderness, and the barren lands his dwellings." He who made the wild ass free, and loosed his bands, provides a habitation for him in the desert, where the voice of man is not heard, nor a human dwelling meets his eye. But every desert is not equally to his liking; it is the barren or salt land in which he delights. So grateful is salt to his taste, that he uniformly prefers brackish water to fresh, and selects for his food those plants that are impregnated with saline particles, or that have bitter juices. He, therefore, retires from the cultivated or fertile regions, not merely to be free from the domination of man, but to enjoy the pasture which is agreeable to his instincts. "The multitude," or the abundance of the city, "he despises for the salt or bitter leaf on the sandy waste."

Into such a state of desolation and sterility was the inheritance of God's ancient people reduced, by the arms of Nebuchadnezzar: "Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briers, yea, upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city: because the palaces shall be forsaken, the multitude of the city shall be left, the forts and towers shall be dens for ever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks*." A more affecting picture can scarcely be conceived; the depopulated fields, and ruined cities, of a country once flowing with milk and honey, were to become the favourite haunts of those shy creatures "for ever,"

* Isa, xxxii, 13, 14.

or during the long period of seventy years. "Until the Spirit" should be poured upon them from on high, from the beginning to the end of the captivity, a tedious and irksome period to the unhappy captives, were the wild asses to stray through their barren fields, and repose in their deserted houses, undisturbed by the presence of man. But the pride and barbarity of their oppressor, were soon visited with a corresponding punishment. He was deprived of reason, which he had so greatly abused, and by the violence of his disorder, "driven from the sons of men, and his heart was made like the beasts; and his dwelling was with the wild asses," in the salt land, and frightful desert. He seems to have been divested of every thing human but the form; irrational and sensual, he was guided solely by his animal propensities. Nor was he longer able to distinguish what was becoming or agreeable, even to the animal nature of man; every desire and appetite was become so brutish, that he felt no wish to associate with beings of his own kind, but lived with the beasts, and fed in their pastures*.

Some respectable writers have considered the *onager* as a solitary creature, refusing to associate even with those of his own species, because he shuns the presence of man, and frequents the most frightful solitudes. But this hasty opinion is completely refuted by the testimony of modern travellers, the nomadic hordes of Tartary, and the trading companies of Bukharia. From their accounts we learn, that the wild asses are still very numerous in the deserts of Great Tartary, and come annually in great herds, which spread themselves in the mountainous deserts to the north and east of lake Aral. Here they pass the summer, and assemble in the autumn by hundreds, and even by thousands, in order to return in company to their former retreats in the mountains of northern Asia. The gregarious character of the wild ass is not in reality contradicted by the prophet in these words: "For they are gone up to Assyria, a wild ass alone by himself: Ephraim

* Dan. v. 21.

hath hired lovers *.” In this passage he describes the perverse and untractable dispositions of Ephraim, and the certain destruction to which their obstinacy exposed them. A wild ass alone, they were by their foolish conduct ready to become a prey to the destroyer. But it is rather the king of Assyria, than the ten tribes, whom he compares to that animal. Instead of trusting in the Lord their God, they courted the favour, and solicited the protection of that ambitious and artful monarch, who, like “a wild ass alone,” consulted only his own selfish inclinations, and aimed at his own aggrandisement. This ill advised measure, from which they promised themselves so much advantage, he declares, would certainly hasten the catastrophe which they sought to avoid. They should find when too late, that they had been the dupes of his deceitful policy, and the victims of his unprincipled ambition.

The wild ass, like almost every creature that inhabits the barren wilderness, is reduced to subsist on coarse and scanty fare. The sweets of unbounded liberty are counterbalanced by the unremitting labour which is necessary to procure him a precarious subsistence. In those salt and dreary wastes, which providence has allotted for his residence, very few plants are to be found, and those, from the heat of the climate, and the nature of the soil, are stunted in their growth, and bitter to the taste: “They see not when good cometh;” for they grow in the parched places in the wilderness, “in a salt land, and not inhabited †.” In such inhospitable regions, the wild ass is compelled to traverse a great extent of country, to scour the plains, and range over the mountains, in order to find here and there a few blades of coarse, withered grass, and browse the tops of the few stunted shrubs which languish in those sandy wilds. Such are the allusions involved in these words: “The range of the mountains is his pasture, and he searcheth after every green thing.”

It must not be supposed that a condition, apparently so hard,

* Hos. viii. 9.

† Jer. xvii. 6.

involves this animal in greater difficulties than many other wild beasts experience. The Creator has, with admirable wisdom and goodness, adapted his constitution and instincts to his situation and manner of life. His temperance corresponds with the barrenness of the soil, and his taste with the peculiar qualities of the plants which it produces. In consequence of this wise and gracious arrangement, a tuft of sickly grass, and a little brackish water, satisfy his moderate demands; and of these, we know from the testimony of Job, he commonly finds enough, even in the parched and sterile deserts of Arabia; "The wilderness yieldeth food for them, and for their children." But, when these fail on the plains, he retires to the mountains, where, under a more temperate sky, the herb still flourishes, and the water streams. This apparently trifling circumstance, the Psalmist deemed not unworthy of his notice nor of being celebrated in the songs of Zion: "He sendeth the springs into the valleys which run among the hills: They give drink to every beast of the field, the wild asses quench their thirst*." But, even these resources occasionally fail; the mountain herb is burnt up, and the springs are exhausted; then, in spite of his habitual temperance, he is reduced in common with other animals, to a state of severe suffering. At such times he takes his station on the top of a rock, to cool in the passing breeze, the fever which rages in his veins, and sucks in the air for want of water. To such a state of wretchedness was he reduced by the dearth which Jeremiah so feelingly describes: "The wild asses did stand in the high places; they snuffed up the wind like dragons; their eyes did fail because there was no grass†." They seek relief on the summits of the highest mountains from the overwhelming heat: they snuff up the wind like dragons, which stand daily for some hours with the head erect, and the mouth wide open towards the sky, sucking in the air; their eyes, which are extremely fine and sharp sighted, for want of nourishment, lose their brilliancy and power of vision. Such painful

* Ps. civ. 10, 11.

† Jer. xiv. 6.

sufferings, we learn from Virgil, are sometimes experienced in the more temperate climate of Italy :

——— “ Aut bucula cælum

Suspiciens, patulis captavit naribus auras.” 1 *Geor.* l. 375.

Under the pressure of extreme want, like man and other animals, the wild ass becomes faint, his eyes fail, and he pines in silent despair ; but in less trying circumstances, he expresses his uneasy feelings by frequently braying. From this harsh disagreeable sound, peculiar to the ass, he has obtained from his Maker, in a passage of Scripture already quoted, the appropriate name of the brayer : “ Who hath sent out the wild ass free ? or, who hath loosed the bands of the brayer ” (עֲרִיר). The same instinct which excites the *onager* to complain in a low grumbling noise when he meets with any molestation, and in louder tones when hungry, and in want of pasture, caused the afflicted patriarch to mourn in the days of his adversity, and complain under his agonizing sufferings and cruel bereavements. His miserable comforters reproached him with indulging in loud and frequent complaints ; and in reply, the patient sufferer puts the significant question : “ Doth the wild ass bray when he hath grass ? Or loweth the ox over his fodder ? ” No : they are then contented and silent ; and so was he in a state of prosperity. Then his tongue uttered no complaint ; he was a stranger to a fretful and unquiet spirit. But, now that he was deprived of all his earthly comforts, agonized with pain, and oppressed with grief, it was as natural for him to complain as for the wild ass to bray, and the ox to low, when they can find no grass to allay the cravings of hunger.

To live with the wild ass in the desert, and to encounter the various hardships inseparable from his condition, has been justly reckoned by the orientals the lowest degree of wretchedness to which the poor and needy can be reduced ; and to be insulted by such mean and contemptible persons, the last disgrace which fallen greatness is doomed to suffer. It accordingly added much to the poignancy of Job's afflictions, that he had become

the derision of these dregs of society, whose fathers he would have disdained to set with the dogs of his flock; whose families were unfit for any useful purpose, and had been from one generation to another a public nuisance. His description of their hereditary indigence and wretchedness, is extremely animated and striking. It is thus translated by Dr Peddie, in his excellent essay on this article: "In want and severe hunger, they gnawed the desert; a place forsaken, desolate, and waste. They cropped the tops of the salt tasted herb upon the bush; and the root of the genista was their meat. From the society of men they were expelled, who chased them with shouting as they do a thief, to dwell in the precipices of the torrents, holes of the earth, and caverns of the rocks. Among the bushes they brayed; under the briars they were gathered together*."

Every natural historian has recorded the extreme wildness of this animal. He is so jealous of his liberty, that on the slightest alarm, or the first appearance of danger, he flies with amazing swiftness into the desert. His senses are so acute, that it is impossible to approach him in the open country. But, in spite of all his vigilance, the hunter often encloses him in his toils, and leads him away into captivity. Even in this unhappy state, he never submits his neck to the yoke of man without a determined resistance. "Sent out free" by him that made him, he is tenacious of his independence, and opposes, to the extraordinary methods which his captors are forced to employ, the most savage obstinacy; and for the most part, he baffles all their endeavours to tame him; still he "scorneth the multitude of the city, neither regards he the crying of the driver." On the authority of this text, Chrysostom says, "this animal is strong and untameable; man can never subdue him, whatever efforts he may make for that purpose." But Varro affirms, on the contrary, that "the wild ass is fit for labour; that he is easily tamed; and that when he is once tamed, he never resumes his original wildness." The words of Jehovah certainly give

* Job xxx. 3—7.

no countenance to the opinion of the Greek father ; they only intimate, that it is extremely difficult to subdue the high spirit, and stubborn temper of this animal ; for the apostle James declares, that “ every kind of beast is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind *,” and great numbers of them are actually broken to the yoke in Persia, and some other countries. But, it appears from the statement of Professor GMELIN, that the Persians tame the young *onagers* ; and the reason probably is, that they seldom or never succeed in rendering a full grown *onager* serviceable to man.

Not more untameable and indocile is the wild ass, in the mind of Zophar, than the human kind in their present degenerate state : “ Vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass’s colt †.” Empty, self-conceited man, still aspires to equal God in wisdom and knowledge ; still fondly supposes himself qualified to sit in judgment on the divine proceedings, and to take the exclusive management of his own affairs, although the wild ass’s colt is not more rude, indocile, and untractable. Nor is this an acquired habit : he is born a wild ass’s colt, and therefore by nature equally impatient of salutary restraint, equally wilful in consulting his own inclinations. And this defect in his character, no created arm is able to subdue ; it yields only to the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, who makes him willing in the day of effectual calling, by a display of almighty power.

This mortifying comparison of Zophar, is, in another part of the sacred volume, applied by the angel of the Lord to Ishmael and his posterity. “ And he will be a wild man ; his hand will be against every man, and every man’s hand against him ; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren ‡.” The phrase, “ a wild man,” it is well known, is in the original text, “ a wild ass man,” that is, a man like a wild ass in temper and manners. The comparison seems to refer, first to Ishmael himself, and to intimate certain leading traits in his cha-

* James iii. 7.

† Job xi. 12.

‡ Gen. xvi. 12.

rafter ; and then to his offspring in every succeeding age. The troops of *onagers*, are conducted by a leading stallion*, that prefers the most arid deserts of the mountains, keeps watch while his companions repose, and gives the signal at the appearance of an enemy. The Nomades of Asia report of these animals, that the first of a troop which sees a serpent or a beast of prey, makes a certain cry, which brings in a moment, the whole herd around him, when each of them strives to destroy it instantly. Such were the character and manners of Ishmael. He was the first prince of his family, the founder of a powerful nation, of a rough, wild, and untractable disposition. Nor was this all ; ambitious of supreme authority, he loved to place himself at the head of his rising community, to regulate its affairs, and direct its operations ; and, like the high spirited leader of the *onagers*, he could brook no rival. He discovered his ruling passion, when he was but a stripling in the house of his father. Determined to maintain his prerogatives as the elder son, and provoked to see a younger, and a child of a different mother, preferred before him, he gave vent to his indignation, by deriding his brother, and the feast which was made on his account. Expelled for his imprudence from his father's house, he made choice of the sandy desert for his permanent residence, and required the heads of all the families around him, either to acknowledge his supremacy, and treat him with the highest respect, or be driven from his station and neighbourhood. Wherever he pitched his tent, he expected, according to a custom of great antiquity, all tents to be turned with their faces towards it, in token of submission ; that the band might have their eye always upon their master's lodging, and be in readiness to assist him if he were attacked. In this manner did Ishmael dwell "in the presence,"—"before," (لِ) or, "over against the faces of all his brethren."

But the prediction embraced also the character and circumstances of his descendants. The manners and customs of

* Taylor's Calmet, vol. 4.

the Arabians, except in the article of religion, have suffered almost no alteration, during the long period of three thousand years. They have occupied the same country, and followed the same mode of life, from the days of their great ancestor, down to the present times, and range the wide extent of burning sands which separate them from all the surrounding nations, as rude, and savage, and untractable as the wild ass himself. Claiming the barren plains of Arabia, as the patrimonial domain assigned by God to the founder of their nation, they consider themselves entitled to seize, and appropriate to their own use, whatever they can find there. Impatient of restraint, and jealous of their liberty, they form no connection with the neighbouring states; they admit of little or no friendly intercourse, but live in a state of continual hostility with the rest of the world. The tent is their dwelling, and the circular camp their city; the spontaneous produce of the soil, to which they sometimes add a little patch of corn, furnishes them with means of subsistence, amply sufficient for their moderate desires; and the liberty of ranging at pleasure their interminable wilds, fully compensates in their opinion for the want of all other accommodations. Mounted on their favourite horses, they scour the waste in search of plunder, with a velocity surpassed only by the wild ass. They levy contributions on every person that happens to fall in their way; and frequently rob their own countrymen, with as little ceremony as they do a stranger or an enemy: their hand is still against every man, and every man's hand against them. But they do not always confine their predatory excursions to the desert. When booty is scarce at home, they make incursions into the territories of their neighbours, and having robbed the solitary traveller, or plundered the caravan, immediately retire into the deserts far beyond the reach of their pursuers. Their character, drawn by the pen of inspiration, exactly corresponds with this view of their dispositions and conduct: "Behold, as wild asses in the desert, go they forth to their work, rising betimes for a prey:

the wilderness yieldeth food for them and for their children*.” Savage and stubborn as the wild ass which inhabits the same wilderness, they go forth on the horse or the dromedary with inconceivable swiftness, in quest of their prey. Initiated in the trade of a robber from their earliest years, they know no other employment; they choose it as the business of their life, and prosecute it with unwearied activity. They start before the dawn, to invade the village or the caravan; make their attack with desperate courage, and surprising rapidity; and, plunging instantly into the desert, escape from the vengeance of their enemies. Provoked by their continual insults, the nations of ancient and modern times, have often invaded their country with powerful armies, determined to extirpate, or at least to subdue them to their yoke; but they always returned baffled and disappointed. The savage freebooters, disdaining every idea of submission, with invincible patience and resolution, maintained their independence unimpaired to the present times. In spite of all their enemies can do to restrain them, they continue to dwell in the presence of all their brethren, and to assert their right to insult and plunder every one they meet with on the borders, or within the limits of their domains.

The last distinctive character of this animal, which the illustration of Scripture requires to be noted, is the violence of its lust, and the eagerness of the female to obey the impetuous call of nature. To restrain her is then impossible; but when her season is over, she returns of her own accord. Equally ungovernable was the propensity of God's ancient people, in the days of Jeremiah, to join with the heathen around them, in the grossest acts of idolatrous worship. Promises and threatenings, mercies and judgments, were alike unavailing; they burst through every restraint, and when God sent his servants to seek and bring them back, they refused to return. More furious and unreasonable than the wild ass, which returns when her season is over to her former haunts, they felt no

* Job xxiv. 5.

abatement of their madness, no inclination to relinquish the worship of idols, which could profit them nothing, for the service of the true God. "How canst thou say, I am not polluted, I have not gone after Baalim? See thy way in the valley, know what thou hast done. --- Thou art a wild ass used to the wilderness, that snuffeth up the wind at her pleasure; in her occasion, who can turn her away? All they that seek her will not weary themselves; in her month," rather when her season is over, "they will find her*."

The Hart.

The allusions to this animal in the sacred volume, though not numerous, are of considerable importance. Its name in Hebrew (אֵיל) Ail, is considered by Dr Shaw as a generic word, including all the species of the deer kind; whether they are distinguished by round horns, as the stag; or by flat ones, as the fallow-deer; or by the smallness of the branches, as the roe. The term originally signified, aid or assistance; and, in the progress of language, by a natural and easy transition, came to denote an animal furnished with the means of defence, but limited to horned animals, particularly the stag and the hind. This creature seems to resemble the goat, in being remarkably sure footed, and delighting in elevated situations.

The royal Psalmist alludes to both circumstances in one of his triumphant odes: "He maketh my feet like hind's feet, and setteth me upon my high places †." He might also refer, in the first clause, to the uncommon solidity and hardness of its hoof, which Virgil compares to brass, which enables it to tread, with ease, the pointed rocks. It may seem, from the words of David, that the female possesses a surer foot and a harder hoof than the male, for he ascribes to himself the feet of the hind; but since natural historians have not remarked any difference between them, it is probable he was led to the choice from some other cause, which it may not be easy to dis-

* Jer. ii, 24.

† Psa, xviii. 33.

cover. The prophet Habbakuk, in the close of his prayer, has the same allusion, and nearly in the same words: "He will make my feet like hind's feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places*." While the Psalmist contents himself with referring merely to the firmness and security of his position, "he setteth me upon my high places," the prophet encourages himself with the persuasion, that his God would conduct him through every danger, with the same ease and safety as the hind walks among the cliffs of the rock.

To sureness of foot, the hind adds extraordinary swiftness. It bounds, with surprising agility, more than fifty feet; it is therefore with admirable propriety and force, the spouse compares the sudden manifestations of her Saviour's love and power, to the bounding of the hart on the summits of the mountains: "The voice of my beloved! behold he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills†." To give us some idea of the joy and triumph which his appearance in human nature, his resurrection from the dead, and the establishment of his kingdom in all its glory, should produce in the hearts of perishing sinners, the prophet Isaiah borrows the same figure: "Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing‡."

The swiftness of this animal in running, is not less remarkable. Xenophon says, that the celerity of the young hart, when it is alarmed by the absence of its mother, is incomparable:

τοτε ταχος εδενι εικος εσι των τηλικωτων νεωρων,

The rapidity with which the stag flies before the hunter, furnishes Virgil with this figure:

——— "alia de parte patentes

Transmittunt cursu campos atque agmina cervi

Pulverulenta fuga glomerant, montesque relinquunt."

Æn. b. 4. l. 153.

"On the other side, the stags scour along the open plains, and

* Hab. iii. 19.

† Song ii. 8.

‡ Isa. xxxv. 6.

flying, thicken their mingled troops involved in clouds of dust, and forsake the mountains."

This circumstance has not escaped the notice of the spouse, who addresses our Lord in these terms: "Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or a young hart, upon the mountains of spices *."

The hart, naturally of a hot and arid constitution, suffers much from thirst in the oriental regions. He therefore seeks the fountain or the stream with intense desire, particularly when his natural thirst has been aggravated by the pursuit of the hunter. Panting and braying, with eagerness he precipitates himself into the river, that he may quench at once the burning fever which consumes his vitals, in its cooling waters. No circumstance can display more forcibly the ardent breathings of divine love in the soul of a true believer; and the holy Psalmist has availed himself of it with admirable propriety and effect, in the description of his religious feelings, when exiled from the house of God, and a dejected wanderer near the sources of the Jordan: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?" Thus importunate are the desires of the genuine saint, thus earnestly he longs after communion with his God; he feels impatient at a distance from the sanctuary, and finds it impossible to be satisfied with any enjoyment beneath the sensible manifestations of his Redeemer's favour.

The name of the female is inscribed in the title of the twenty-second Psalm: "To the chief musician upon Aijeleth Shahar, or the hind of the morning." These words have greatly divided the sentiments of commentators; and will probably continue to do so, till we obtain a deeper insight into the mysteries of revelation, than is intended for the present state of our being. The Jewish writers, who have been followed by many

* Song viii. 14.

of the Greek fathers, consider them as a metaphor intended to express the early assistance which the circumstances of our Saviour required: and render them, "For obtaining speedy assistance." But, in the sacred Scriptures, the original term *Aijeleth* and its plural, is so uniformly employed to denote the hind or female deer, that the literal meaning of the phrase ought undoubtedly to be preferred. Bochart, interpreting the words literally, seems inclined to the opinion, that this psalm is entitled, *The hind of the morning*; because it is composed in the measure of a sacred ode, then well known among the Jews, which began with these words, and was meant to be sung to the same tune. Besides, the character in the text is properly given to the hind, because she starts with the dawn, suckles her young, and prepares their place where they are to rest through the day, after which, she takes her station at a little distance, and watches over their slumbers. Others, with more probability, think the royal Psalmist refers to his Son and Lord, whose sufferings he describes; who, in the eighth chapter of the Song, is compared to the swift hind upon the mountains of spices, as *Naphtali* had been long before, to a hind let loose. Like the hind of the morning, that shakes off her slumbers with the earliest dawn, to suckle and guard her young one at the risk of her life,—the Saviour appointed from eternity the deliverer of his people, came forth immediately after the fall, to commence the work of our salvation; and when the fulness of time was come, appeared to finish it in his sufferings and death: "Then the dogs compassed him, the assembly of the wicked inclosed him; they pierced his hands and his feet."

It is well known that the hind goes with young eight months, and brings forth her fawn in the beginning of autumn. Why then does Jehovah address these interrogations to Job: "Knowest thou the time when the wild goats of the rock bring forth? Or canst thou mark when the hinds do calve? Canst thou number the months that they fulfil? Or knowest thou the

time when they bring forth *.” Could Job be ignorant of circumstances which were obvious to all the shepherds in the east, who had numerous opportunities of observing the habits and manners of these creatures? It is obvious, that Jehovah could not refer to the mere speculative knowledge of these facts, but to that which is proper to himself, by which he not only knows, but also directs and governs all things. This is confirmed by the use of the verb (שמר) *shamar*, which signifies to observe, to keep, or to guard: Knowest thou the time when the wild goats bring forth, the parturition of the hinds dost thou guard? Without the protecting care of God, who upholds all his works by the word of his power, the whole race of these timid creatures would soon be destroyed by the violence of wild beasts, or the arts of the hunter. It is with great propriety, says one of the ancients, that Jehovah demands, “The birth of the hinds dost thou guard?” for, since this animal is always in flight, and with fear and terror always leaping and skipping about, she could never bring her young to maturity without such a special protection. The providence of God, therefore, is equally conspicuous in the preservation of the mother and the fawn; both are the objects of his compassion and tender care; and consequently, that afflicted man had no reason to charge his Maker with unkindness, who condescends to watch over the goats and the hinds.

It seems to be generally admitted, that the hind brings forth her young with great difficulty; and, so much appears to be suggested in the third verse of the same chapter: “They bow themselves, they bring forth their young ones, they cast out their sorrows.” But if Pliny, and other natural historians, are worthy of credit, divine providence has been graciously pleased to provide certain herbs, which greatly facilitate the birth; and by an unerring instinct, he directs the hind to feed upon them, when the time of gestation draws towards a close. Whatever

* Job xxxix. 1.

be in this assertion, we know from higher authority, that providence does promote the parturition of the hind, by awakening her fears, and agitating her frame by the rolling thunder: "The voice of Jehovah, (a common Hebrew phrase, denoting thunder,) maketh the hinds to calve*." Nor ought we to wonder, that so timorous a creature as the hind, should be so much affected by that awfully imposing sound, when some of the proudest men that ever existed, have been made to tremble. Augustus the Roman emperor, according to Suetonius, was so terrified when it thundered, that he wrapped a seal skin round his body, with the view of defending it from the lightning, and concealed himself in some secret corner till the tempest ceased. The tyrant Caligula, who, sometimes affected to threaten Jupiter himself, covered his head, or hid himself under a bed; and Horace confesses, he was reclaimed from atheism by the terror of thunder and lightning, the effects of which he describes with his usual felicity:

"Quo bruta tellus, et vaga flumina
Quo Styx et invisi horrida Tænari
Sedes, Atlanteus que finis
Concutitur." —

B. 1. Ode 34.

But the hind has no sooner brought forth her fawn, than the pain she suffered is forgotten: "They bow themselves" to bring forth their young ones, "they cast out their sorrows." These words must forcibly remind the reader of the maternal pains and joys of a higher order of beings: "A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world †." It is added, "Their young ones are in good liking, they grow up with corn; they go forth, and return not unto them ‡." Though they are brought forth in sorrow, and have no human owner to provide for their wants, and to guard them from danger, yet, after being suckled a while, they become vigorous and

* Psa. xxix. 9.

† John xvi. 21.

‡ Job xxxix. 4.

active, and shift for themselves in the open fields. They grow up with corn, says our translation ; but the fawn is not commonly fed in the corn field, because it lives in the deserts, and frequents those places which are far remote from the cultivated field. Besides, in Arabia, where Job flourished, the harvest is reaped in the months of March and April, long before the hinds bring forth their young. The fawn, therefore, does not thrive with corn, but with the few shrubs and hardy plants which grow in the wilderness or open country. But the inspired writer has committed no mistake ; the original phrase is capable of another translation, which perfectly corresponds with the condition of that animal in those parts of the world. In Chaldee, the word (בבר) babar, or (בברא) babara, is evidently the same as the Hebrew (בחרץ) bahouts. Thus in Laban's address to Jacob, when he arrived in Padan-aram, "Why standest thou without," the Hebrew word is (בחרץ) bahouts ; and in Jonathan and Onkelos it is (בברא) babara. The same remark applies to a text in the book of Exodus : "If he rise again and walk abroad upon his staff;" in Hebrew (בחרץ) bahouts ; in Chaldee, (בברא) babara *. Hence, the phrase may be translated, They grow up without, or in the open field. Many other instances might be specified, but these are sufficient to establish the justice of the remark. Even the Hebrew phrase itself, is translated by Schultens, "in the open field," which is indisputably the sense of the passage under consideration. Thus, when the fawn is calved, it grows up in the desert, under the watchful providence of God ; it soon forsakes the spot where it was brought forth, and suckled by the dam, and returns no more.

Some ancient writers allege, that the hind bestows much pains in rearing and instructing her young. She carefully hides her fawn in the thicket, or among the long grass, and corrects it with her foot, when it discovers an inclination prematurely to leave its covert. When it has acquired sufficient

* Gen. xxiv. 31. Exod. xxi. 19.

strength, she teaches it to run, and to bound from one rock to another; till, conscious of its ability to provide for itself, it bends its rapid course into the boundless waste, and from that moment, loses the recollection of its parent and her tender care.

But affectionate as is the hind to her young one, and attentive to its safety and instruction, circumstances occur at times, which diminish, which even extinguish the benignity of her nature, and render her insensible to the sufferings of her own offspring. The slightness of her connection with guilty man, and her distance from his dwelling, do not prevent her from sharing in the calamities to which all sublunary natures are subjected on account of his sin. The grievous famine which dims the fine eye of the wild ass, and compels her to take refuge on the summits of the mountains, where, sucking in the cooling breeze instead of water, which is no longer to be found, she lingers out a few miserable days, hardens the gentle and affectionate heart of the hind, that she forsakes her fawn in the open field, because there is no grass, without making a single effort to preserve its existence*: She forsakes it when it is newly calved, when her natural affection is commonly strongest, and when it needs most her fostering care; she forsakes it in the desert, where it must soon perish of hunger; deaf to its cries, and indifferent to its sufferings, she leaves it in search of somewhat to prolong her own wretched existence. At such a failure of the kindest affections in the heart of a loving hind, we shall not be surprised, when the dreadful effects of severe famine on the human mind are considered. The prediction of Moses was completely fulfilled: "Thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons, and of thy daughters, which the Lord thy God hath given thee, in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee."—"The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground, for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil toward the hus-

* Jer. xiv. 5.

band of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward her daughter, and toward the young one that cometh out from between her feet, and toward her children which she shall bear; for she shall eat them for want of all things, secretly, in the siege and straitness *.”

The hart being a ruminating animal, and one that divides the hoof, was classed by the law of Moses among the clean beasts, and the use of its flesh, recommended to the chosen people: “Even as the roe-buck and the hart is eaten, so thou shalt eat them: the unclean and the clean, shall eat of them alike†.” In a succeeding chapter, it is expressly mentioned as one of the clean animals, the flesh of which, the people of Israel were permitted to use: “These are the beasts that ye shall eat --- the hart, and the roe-buck, and the fallow-deer‡.” This permission was a great advantage to the Israelites; for the lofty mountains of Syria, Amana, Lebanon, and Carmel, swarmed with these animals, which, descending into the plains to graze in the cultivated fields, invited them to the healthful exercise of the chase, and supplied their tables with a species of food, equally abundant and agreeable.

The dying patriarch in his farewell benediction, compares his son Naphtali to “a hind let loose§;” the sense of which is difficult and obscure. The most probable opinion is the one which has been generally received; that this tribe, like their immediate founder, were to be more distinguished by the gentleness of their manners, their love of peace, and their eloquence, than by their skill in arms. Bochart, in attempting to explain this passage, proposes to reject the points, to place the Hebrew term (איליה) ayala in the state of regimine, by changing the *hay* into *thau*, to change the participle into a substantive noun, by inserting a *vau*, and alter the character of (אמרי) imre, by inserting a *yod* between the *mem* and the *resh*. By these changes in the text, our learned author elicits a very different sense: Naphtali is a spreading tree which sendeth forth beau-

* Deut. xxviii, 53. † Ch. xii, 15. ‡ Ch. xiv, 4. § Gen. xlix, 21.

tiful branches. But if such a mode of criticism were admitted, the sacred Scriptures might be made to speak any thing an interpreter chose; and by consequence, they would be rendered entirely useless as a rule of faith and practice. No book whatever, ancient or modern, could preserve the meaning of the author, and maintain its character, under such unwarrantable treatment. Add to this, that a comparison of the same kind, and almost in the same words as Bochart proposes, immediately follows, which but ill accords with the beautiful variety for which the other parts of the address are so remarkable. Such a tame and meagre repetition, it is presumed, is no where else to be found in the sacred volume, and ought not to be admitted in this passage, without the most cogent proof of its being the dictate of inspiration.

But if the benediction of Jacob is difficult and obscure, the meaning of Solomon's recommendation is clear and precise: "Rejoice with the wife of thy youth. Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe*:" the hind of loves, and the roe of grace, in the language of ancient Hebrews mean, the amiable hind and the lovely roe. These creatures, it is generally admitted, in the whole form of their bodies, and in all their dispositions and manners, are wonderfully pleasing. The ancients were particularly delighted with them; they kept them in their houses; they fed them at their tables with the greatest care; they washed, and combed, and adorned them with garlands of flowers, and chains of gold or silver. This custom seems to have been very general in the east: for in Virgil, Sylvia performed all these kind offices to her favourite stag:

"Cervus erat forma præstanti et cornibus ingens

Assuetum imperiis soror omni Sylvia cura

Mollibus intexens ornabat cornua sertis.

Patebat que foram, puroque in fonte lavabat." *Æn. b. vii. l. 483.*
The lamb and the kid were treated with still greater familiarity, as we learn from the parable of Nathan, which, by the

* Prov. v. 18, 19.

command of Jehovah, he uttered in the presence of David : “ But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up ; and it grew up together with him, and with his children ; it did eat of his own meat, and drink of his own cup, and lay in his own bosom, and was unto him as a daughter * ” The hind seems to have been admitted to all those privileges, except that of reposing with her master on the same couch, which must have been rendered inconvenient by the largeness of her size. If these things are duly considered, the charge of the wise man will not appear so singular ; to the ear of an oriental it was quite intelligible, and perfectly proper. Let a man tenderly love his spouse ; relax in her company from the severer duties of life ; take pleasure in her innocent and amiable conversation ; and in fine, treat her with all the kindness, and admit her to all the familiarity, which the beauty of her form, the excellence of her dispositions, and the nearness of her relation, entitle her to expect.

It has been the custom in all ages, to entreat or adjure by those things which are known to be peculiarly dear to the person addressed. Thus, unhappy Dido besought Æneas to remain,

—“ per ego has lacrymas dextramque tuamte,
(Quando aliud mihi jam miseræ nihil ipsa reliqui)

Per connubia nostra, per inceptos hymenæos ;

Si bene quid de te merui, fuit aut tibi quidquam

Dulce meum miserere domus labentes. *Æn. b. 4. l. 314.*

In the same manner, the spouse avails herself of the great delight which the daughters of Israel were known to take in the roes and the hinds, in her charge not to disturb the repose of her beloved : “ I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love till he please†.” She repeats her charge in the next chapter, in precisely the same terms : for those that experience the sweetness of communion with Christ, and the

* 2 Sam. xii. 3.

† Song ii. 7

sensible manifestations of his love, cannot but earnestly desire the continuance of such inestimable favours, and be solicitous that nothing be done either by themselves or others, to grieve his holy Spirit, and to provoke him to withdraw.

The Ibex, or Wild Goat.

This animal belongs to the same species with the domestic goat, and exhibits nearly the same character and dispositions. His Hebrew name, Yaala, from a verb which signifies to ascend, indicates one of the strongest habits implanted in his nature, to scale the loftiest pinnacle of the rock, and the highest ridge of the mountains. He takes his station on the edge of the steep, and seems to delight in gazing on the gulf below, or surveying the immense void before him. Those frightful precipices which are inaccessible to man, and other animals, where the most adventurous hunter dares not follow him, are his favourite haunts. He sleeps on their brow; he sports on their smallest projections, secure from the attack of his enemies. These facts were observed by the shepherds of the east, recorded by the pen of inspiration, and celebrated in the songs of Zion: "The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats." In the expostulation which Jehovah addressed to Job, they are called "the wild goats of the rock;" because it is the place which the Creator has appointed for their proper abode, and to which he has adapted all their dispositions and habits. The dreary and frightful precipices, which frown over the Dead sea, toward the wilderness of Engedi, the inspired historian of David's life, calls emphatically "the rocks of the wild goats," as if accessible only to those animals.

The ibex is distinguished by the size of his horns. No creature, says Gesner, has horns so large as those of the mountain goat, for they reach from his head as far as his buttocks. Long before his time, Pliny remarked, that the ibex is a creature of wonderful swiftness, although its head is loaded with vast horns. According to Scaliger, the horns of an elderly goat

are sometimes eighteen pounds weight, and marked by twenty-four circular prominences, the indications of as many years.

The horns of the ibex, according to the Chaldee interpreter, are mentioned by the prophet among the valuable commodities which enriched the merchants of Tyre, in the days of her prosperity: "The men of Dedan were thy merchants; many isles were the merchandise of thine hand; they brought thee for a present, horns of ivory and ebony*." It is certain, that the horns of this animal were greatly esteemed among the ancients, on account of the various useful purposes to which they were converted. The Cretan archers had them manufactured into bows; and the votaries of Bacchus, into large cups, one of which, says *Ælian*, could easily hold three measures. The conjecture of *Bochart* is therefore extremely probable, that the *ἰξάλος* of *Homer*, is the ibex of the Latins; for he calls it a wild goat, says that it was taken among the rocks, and had horns of sixteen palms, of which the bow of *Pandarus* was fabricated.

ΑΥΤΗΝ' ΕΒΥΛΑ ΤΟΪΖΟΝ ΕΥΪΘΟΝ, ΙΞΑΛΟΥ ΑΙΓΡΟΣ

Αγριε——

Il. b. 4. l. 105.

We may conclude from the wisdom and goodness of God, which shine conspicuously in all his works, that the enormous horns of the ibex, are not a useless incumbrance, but, in some respects, necessary to its safety and comfort. The Arabian writers aver, that when it sees the hunter approach the top of the rock, where it happens to have taken its station, and has no other way of escape, turning on its back, it throws itself down the precipice, at once defended by its long bending horns from the projections of the rock, and saved from being dashed in pieces, or even hurt by the fall. The opinion of *Pliny* is more worthy of credit, that the horns of the ibex serve as a poise to its body in its perilous excursions among the precipitous rocks, or when it attempts to leap from one crag to another. The feats which it is said to perform among the

* *Ezek. xxvii. 15.*

Alpine summits, are almost incredible; one fact, however, seems to be certain, that in bounding from one height to another, it far surpasses all the other varieties of the species. To hunt the ibex, has been justly reckoned a most perilous enterprise, which frequently terminates in the hunter's destruction. These facts place in a very strong light, the extreme dangers which at one time compelled David to seek a refuge from the pursuit of his infatuated father-in-law, among the rocks of the wild goats; and, at the same time, the bitter and implacable spirit which prompted Saul to follow him into places so full of peril.

The wild goat seems to have been generally reckoned a beautiful creature by the ancient Israelites, and other eastern nations; for the wise man in one of his Proverbs, mentions it with the hind, as an object of esteem and attachment: "Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe*." The original term, in the close of the quotation, is the same which in other places is rendered the ibex, or wild goat, which it properly signifies. The ibex is finely shaped, graceful in its motions, and amiable in its manners. The female is particularly celebrated by some natural historians, for tender affection to her young, and the incessant vigilance with which she watches over their safety. To these circumstances the wise man doubtless referred; and they sufficiently account for the regard which the ancients had for this animal, and the notice with which it is honoured by the royal teacher.

The Antelope.

The name of the antelope in the Hebrew Scripture, is (צב) Tsebi; and in the version of the Seventy (Δορκας) Dorcas. In our version, the original term is translated roe and roebuck; but Dr Shaw, and others, have proved by several conclusive arguments, that it is not the roe, but the antelope, which the sacred writers intend. The former is extremely rare in the oriental regions, while the latter is common in every part of the Levant. But is it to be supposed, that the sacred writers would

* Prov. v. 19.

borrow their figures from creatures which are either not known at all in Palestine and the surrounding countries, or but rarely seen; while they had not even a name for an animal, which, in large herds of several thousands, fed in their fields, and around their dwellings? Such a supposition would contradict some of the strongest laws which regulate the operations of the human mind, and is therefore quite inadmissible. It is equally absurd to suppose, that the Jewish legislator, when he regulated by fixed laws the food of his people, would mention a creature which they probably had never seen, of which perhaps they had not even heard, which was not to be found in the deserts over which they had to travel, nor in the country they were to possess; while he omitted one of daily occurrence, which was found every where, in the wilderness and in the cultivated field, on the mountains and in the plains; whose flesh was greatly esteemed, and, by consequence, could not fail to become an important article of subsistence. These considerations are of themselves sufficient to establish the superior claims of the antelope to a place in the sacred volume.

The arguments which have been drawn from the etymological meaning of the Hebrew terms צבא, and צבי, and the authority of the Septuagint, although of inferior importance, are not destitute of weight. The first of these names suggests the idea of a very gregarious animal; but this is not the character of the roes, for, instead of associating in herds, they live in separate families; while the antelopes are commonly found in very large herds, sometimes to the number of two or three thousand together*. The second term צבי, primarily signifies beauty; and when put for the concrete, as in this instance, by a very common figure of speech in Hebrew, has the force of a superlative, and signifies a thing or animal of uncommon beauty. Thus the land of Canaan is, in the prophet, styled ארץ דגב, the land of beauty; or, as it is rendered by our translators, the glory of all lands†. The tsebi, therefore, is an animal

* Russel's Aleppo, vol. 2, p. 153.

† Ezek. xx. 6, 15.

that excels in beauty ; which exactly corresponds with all the accounts that natural historians have given us of the antelope. Both the roe and the antelope, it must be admitted, are, in the general opinion of mankind, very beautiful animals ; but the preference is commonly given to the latter.

The Septuagint uniformly translate the terms צבי and צבא, by *δορκας* ; and the correctness of their translation is attested by Luke, for he mentions “ a certain disciple ” who resided “ at Joppa, named Tabitha, which, by interpretation, is called Dorcas.” The name Tabitha is formed by a slight alteration from the Chaldee noun (טביא) Tabia, and this from the Hebrew term (צבי) tsebi. The Hebrew term signifies, as has been already observed, a creature of surpassing beauty ; Dorcas, its divinely attested equivalent, limiting somewhat the general signification, denotes a creature remarkable for the fineness of its eyes ; and from this last circumstance, it is conjectured that Tabitha received her name. But while the eyes of the roe have attracted no particular attention, so far as the writer has observed, the antelope has been celebrated for the fineness of its eyes in all the countries of the east. Their beauty, according to Shaw, is proverbial there to this day ; and it is still the greatest compliment which, in these countries, can be paid to a fine woman, to say, “ You have the eyes of an antelope*.” From Bochart, and other authors, we learn that it was equally celebrated by the ancients for the acuteness of its vision ; its eyes, they pretend, never become bleared ; it sees in the dark ; it sleeps with both eyes open, or, as others will have it, with one eye open and another shut. These circumstances appear to be much more applicable to the antelope, which is a quadruped well known, than to the roe, which is either not known at all, or else very rare, in these countries.

The natives of Syria, make a distinction between the antelopes of the mountain, and those of the plain. Dr Russel, who gives us this information, says, “ the former is the most

* Encyc. Britan.

beautifully formed, its back and sides are of a dark brown colour, and it bounds with surprising agility; the latter is of a much lighter colour, its limbs are not so cleanly turned, and it is neither so strong, nor so active; both, however, are so fleet, that the grey-hounds, though reckoned excellent, cannot, without the aid of the falcon, come up with them, except in soft deep ground*." This is probably the reason, that the sacred writers frequently mention the "antelope upon the mountains," and not simply the antelope, when they allude to surpassing beauty of form, or amazing rapidity of motion.

The swiftness of this beautiful creature, has been celebrated by writers of every age, in terms of high admiration. Its exquisite symmetry, its active form, and the delicate turn of its limbs, clearly shew, that it is intended by its Maker, to hold a distinguished place among the fleetest animals that scour the desert. It seems rather to vanish, than to run from the pursuer, and when closely pressed, bounds with so great agility, that it hardly seems to touch the ground in its career. Opius calls it the swiftest species of goat; and Ælian says, it equals the whirlwind in speed. He outruns the antelope, said the Arabians, when they wished to pay the highest compliment to the youthful warrior. To this trait in its character, the sacred writers often allude. The surprising agility which Asahel, the brother of Joab, displayed in his pursuit of Abner, drew this eulogium from the sacred historian: "And Asahel was light of foot, as one of the antelopes that are in the field†." Another allusion to the amazing speed of that animal, occurs in the description of the warlike qualifications, which distinguished a troop of Gadites in the service of David: "They were men of might, men of war, fit for the battle, that could handle shield and buckler, whose faces were like the faces of lions, and were as swift as the roes (the antelopes) upon the mountains‡."

In the Song of Solomon, the spouse more than once, com-

* Hist. of Aleppo, vol. 2, p. 150.

† 2 Sam. ii. 18.

‡ 1 Chron. xii. 8.

compares her beloved to the antelope, particularly alluding to the wonderful elasticity of its limbs, and the velocity with which, by a few leaps, it scales the loftiest precipice, or bounds from one cliff to another. Waiting with eager expectation his promised coming, she hears him at last speaking peace and comfort to her soul; and instantly describes him as hastening in the ardour of his love to her relief, and surmounting with ease, every obstruction in his way: "The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. My beloved is like a roe, (an antelope) or a young hart *," hasting with inconceivable activity and swiftness to my relief. In allusion to the same property, she entreats him speedily to return, and revive her drooping soul with the gracious intimations of his love: "Turn, my beloved, and be thou like (an antelope,) or a young hart upon the mountains of Bethel†." Leave me solitary and mournful no longer; haste with the alacrity and speed of an antelope; lightly bound over those mountains, which separate us far from each other, and prevent our intercourse. The mutual endearments of Christ and his church, in that inspired Song, are closed with a similar invitation: "Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to (an antelope,) or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices‡,"—that bounds among the mountains, where it feeds on the fragrant herbs which adorn and enrich their declivities, and is excited to greater activity by their pungent odours. Haste from the ineffable delights "of the everlasting mountains, and perpetual hills" of heaven, to the inferior, but exhilarating pleasures of grace and mercy below.

The antelope, like the hind, with which it is so frequently associated in Scripture, is a timid creature, extremely jealous and watchful, sleeps little, is easily disturbed, takes alarm on the slightest occasion; and the moment its fears are awakened, it flies, or seems rather to disappear from the sight of the intruder. Soft and cautious is the step which interrupts not the

* Song ii. 8, 9.

† Verse 17.

‡ Ch. viii. 14.

light slumbers of this gentle and suspicious creature. It is probable from some hints in the sacred volume, that the shepherd in the eastern desert, sometimes wished to beguile the tedious moments, by contemplating the beautiful form of the sleeping antelope. But this was a gratification he could not hope to enjoy, unless he approached it with the utmost care, and maintained a profound silence. When, therefore, an oriental charged his companion by the antelope, not to disturb the repose of another, he intimated, by a most expressive and beautiful allusion, the necessity of using the greatest circumspection. This statement imparts a great degree of clearness and energy, to the solemn adjuration, which the spouse twice addresses to the daughters of Jerusalem, when she charged them not to disturb the repose of her beloved: "I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes (the antelopes) and the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love till he please*." In this language, which is pastoral, and equally beautiful and significant, the spouse delicately intimates her anxiety to detain her Lord, that she may enjoy the happiness of contemplating his glory; her deep sense of the evil nature and bitter consequences of sin; her apprehension, lest her companions, the members of her family, should by some rash and unholy deed, provoke him to depart; and how reasonable it was, that they who coveted the society of that beautiful creature, and were accustomed to watch over its slumbers in guarded silence, should be equally cautious, not to disturb the communion which she then enjoyed with her Saviour.

To hunt the antelope, is a favourite amusement in the east; but which, from its extraordinary swiftness, is attended with great difficulty. On the first alarm, it flies like an arrow from the bow, and leaves the best mounted hunter, and the fleetest dog, far behind. "The grey-hound," say the compilers of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "the fleetest of dogs, is unequal in the course; and the sportsman is obliged to call in the aid of the

* Song ii, 7. and iii. 5.

falcon, trained to the work, to seize on the animal, and impede its motions, to give the dogs time to overtake it." Dr Russel, in his history of Aleppo, thus describes the chase of the antelope: "They permit horsemen, without dogs, if they advance gently, to approach near, and do not seem much to regard a caravan that passes within a little distance: but the moment they take the alarm, they bound away, casting from time to time, a look behind; and if they find themselves pursued, they lay their horns backward, almost close on the shoulders, and flee with incredible swiftness. When dogs appear, they instantly take alarm; for which reason, the sportsmen endeavour to steal upon the antelope unawares, to get as near as possible before slipping the dogs, and then pushing on full speed, they throw off the falcon, which, being taught to strike or fix upon the cheek of the game, retards its course by repeated attacks, till the grey-hounds have time to get up. The diversion is noble, but the sportsman must ride hard, who expects to be in at the death*."

This statement furnishes a beautiful illustration of that prophecy, in which Isaiah describes the terror that overwhelmed the inhabitants of Babylon, and the rapidity of their flight, when the Medes and Persians forced their way into the city. "It shall be like a chased (antelope,) and as a sheep that no man taketh up; they shall every man turn to his own people, and flee every one into his own land†."

Before dogs were so generally employed, the hunters were obliged to make use of nets and snares, to entangle the game. When the antelope finds itself enclosed in the toils, terror lends it additional strength and activity; it strains every nerve, with vigorous and incessant exertion to break the snare, and escape before the pursuer arrives. And such is the conduct which the wise man recommends to the man who has rashly engaged to be surety for his neighbour: "Deliver thyself as (an antelope) from the hand of the hunter, and as a bird from the

* Hist. of Aleppo, vol. 2, p. 153.

† Isa. xiii. 14.

hand of the fowler*." The snare is spread, the adversary is at hand, instantly exert all thy powers to obtain a discharge of the obligation ; a moment's hesitation may involve thee and thy family in irretrievable ruin.

The only other allusion to the antelope, deserving of notice, occurs in the Song, which is so well illustrated by Dr Peddie in his papers on Sacred Zoology, that I cannot do better than transcribe his words: " They often produce twins ; and the beautiful appearance of a pair of twin gazels, or young antelopes, whose horns are not yet grown, and who feed together in a rich pasture, where the little creatures are almost overtopped by the lilies, and other wild flowers, which enamel the field, their dark brown shoulders only being visible, seems to have occasioned the similitude in two places of the Song of Solomon, where the spouse's beauty is described as conformed to the image of Christ, and adorned with the graces of his Spirit: ' Thy two breasts are like two young (antelopes) that are twins, which feed among the lilies †.'"

The flesh of this animal is very grateful to the taste of an oriental. It is, in the estimation of Arabian writers, the most delicious and wholesome of all venison. They pronounce its juices better than those of any other wild animal, and more adapted to the human constitution. The sentiments of these venerable ancients, are confirmed by the testimony of several intelligent modern authors. Dr Shaw says, " it is in great esteem in the east for food, having a sweet musky taste, which is highly agreeable to their palates ;" and according to Dr Russel, " the antelope venison, during the winter, or sporting season, is well flavoured, but very lean, and in the spring is fat, and of a flavour which might vie with English venison." These statements account for its being daily served up on the sumptuous table of Solomon and other eastern princes ‡."

Besides, the antelope has all the marks which distinguished

* Prov. vi. 5. † Song iv. 5. and vii. 3. Christ. Mag. vol. 6. Antelope.

‡ 1 Kings iv. 23.

clean animals under the law; it both divides the hoof and chews the cud. An Israelite, therefore, might lawfully eat of its flesh, although he was not permitted to offer it in sacrifice. This creature belonged to the class of clean beasts, which the people of Israel, as well during their wanderings in the desert, as after their settlement in the land of promise, were permitted to kill wherever they could find them, and use for the subsistence of their families, although, at the time, they might be ceremonially unclean. But the ox, the sheep, and the goat, which some writers distinguish by the name of clean cattle, might both be lawfully eaten and offered in sacrifice; yet while the chosen people sojourned in the wilderness, they were forbidden to kill any of these animals, although intended merely for private use, except at the door of the tabernacle; and if ceremonially unclean, even to eat of their flesh. This regulation occasioned little inconvenience to the tribes in the desert, where they lived in one vast encampment, in the midst of which the sacred tent was pitched; but after their settlement in Canaan, their circumstances required either an alteration in the law, or that the greater part of the nation should abstain altogether from the use of flesh. The permission was accordingly enlarged; while they were still restricted to shed the blood of the cattle intended for sacrifice, only before the national altar, they were permitted, when too far from the tabernacle, to kill those which they designed merely for common food, in any of their cities, or in their own houses; even the ceremonial regulation was abolished, and in private clean and unclean fared alike. This permission, which is couched in very express terms, is repeated in the course of a few verses, lest the suspicious mind of an Israelite might suppose that Jehovah envied his people the enjoyment of what he had given them; and “in both instances it is illustrated by an example which must, from the use of it, have been familiar to the Israelites:” “The unclean and the clean may eat thereof, as of the (antelope), and as of the hart*.”

* Deut. xii. 13—16 and 20—21.

The Unicorn.

The name of this animal in the Hebrew text is (רִים) rim, or (רָאם) reem; and is derived from a verb, which signifies to be exalted or lifted up. This term, which in Hebrew signifies only height, is rendered by the Greek interpreters *μονοκεφαλός*, and by the Latins *unicornis*; both which answer to our English word unicorn. Jerome and others, doubtful to what animal it belongs, render it sometimes rhinoceros, and sometimes unicorn. It is evident from the sacred Scriptures, that the reem is an animal of considerable height, and of great strength. Thus Balaam reluctantly declared concerning Israel: "God brought them out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of (a reem) an unicorn*." So great in the estimation of that reluctant seer, was the strength of the reem, that he repeats the eulogium in the very same words in the next chapter†. From the grateful ascriptions of David, we learn that it is a horned animal: "But my horn shalt thou exalt like the horn of an unicorn‡." And Moses, in his benediction of Joseph, states a most important fact, that it has two horns; the words are: His horns are like the horns of (רָאם a reem, in the singular number,) an unicorn. Some interpreters, determined to support the claims of the unicorn to the honour of a place in the sacred volume, contend, that in this instance, the singular, by an enallage or change of number, is put for the plural. But this is a gratuitous assertion; and besides, if admitted, would greatly diminish the force and propriety of the comparison. The two sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, had been adopted into the family of Jacob, and appointed the founders of two distinct tribes, whose descendants in the times of Moses were become numerous and respectable in the congregation. These were the two horns with which Joseph was to attack and subdue his enemies; and by consequence, propriety required an allusion to a creature, not with one, but with two horns.

In the book of Job, the reem is represented as a very fierce

* Num. xxiii. 22.

† Verse 8.

‡ Ps. xcii. 10.

and intractable animal, which, although possessed of sufficient strength to labour, sternly and pertinaciously refused to bend his neck to the yoke: "Will the unicorn (in Hebrew the reem,) be willing to serve thee, or abide by thy crib? Canst thou bind the reem with his band in the furrow, or will he harrow the valleys after thee? Wilt thou trust him because his strength is great? Or wilt thou leave thy labour to him? Wilt thou believe him that he will bring home thy seed, and gather it into thy barn?" So far from being disposed to submit to the dominion of man, he is extremely hostile and dangerous. Little inferior to the lion himself in strength and fury, he is sometimes associated in Scripture with that destroyer: "Save me," cried our Lord to his Father, "save me from the lion's mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of (ראמים) the unicorns*." In the prophecies of Isaiah, it is united with other powerful animals, to symbolize the great leaders and princes of the hostile nations, that laid waste his native land: "And the unicorns shall come down with them, and the bullocks with the bulls: and their land shall be soaked with blood, and their dust made fat with fatness†." Such are the general characters of the reem, as delineated in the sacred volume: but besides these, several hints are given, which seem to point out, with no little certainty, the genus under which the reem ought to be classed. In that sublime composition, where the psalmist assigns the reasons why God is to be honoured, he joins the calf with the young reem, and ascribes to them the same kind of movement: "He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young (reem, or) unicorn‡." The prophet Isaiah, in a passage already quoted, classes him with the bullocks and the bulls; and Moses assigns him the same station, furnishes him with horns, and makes him push like a bullock§. If these circumstances are duly considered, no doubt will remain that he is nearly allied to the creatures with which he is associated.

* Psa. xxii, 21. † Isa. xxxiv, 7. ‡ Psa. xxxix, 6. § Deut. xxxiii, 17.

These observations will enable us to examine with more success, the various interpretations of the original name, proposed by different expositors. Our translators, following the Greek fathers, consider the reem as a creature with one horn; and, agreeably to this idea, render it unicorn. But, this interpretation is encumbered with insuperable difficulties. The unicorn is a creature totally unknown in those countries where the Scriptures were written, and the patriarchs sojourned. But, is it probable, that God himself, in his expostulation with Job, would take an illustration of considerable length, from a creature with which the afflicted man was altogether unacquainted; and mention this unknown animal in the midst of those with which he was quite familiar? Nor is it to be supposed, that Moses, David, and the prophets, would so frequently speak of an animal unknown in Egypt and Palestine, and the surrounding countries; least of all, that they would borrow their comparisons from it, familiarly mention its great strength, and describe its habits and dispositions. Aware of this objection, and at a loss how to elude its force, some writers remove the native land of the unicorn to India. But this will be found of no advantage to their cause; for still the objection returns with nearly undiminished force; how could the sacred writers borrow their illustrations from a creature with which, even on this supposition, they were so little acquainted? They make no mention of the elephant, a creature not less powerful and fierce than the unicorn, renowned for its docility, and the various important services which it renders to man; and numerous in Africa, and many countries of Asia. Of this noble animal, the people of Israel seemed to have no knowledge at all, except what they derived from the trade in ivory, which they carried on during the reign of Solomon to some extent. But, if the elephant, which abounded in countries much nearer the Holy land than India, whose teeth formed an article of commerce among the ancient Israelites, was so little known to

them ; it cannot be supposed that they had any knowledge of an animal which was proper to India.

But, we have in reality no proof that such an animal ever existed in any part of the world. It must be admitted, that both Pliny and *Ælian* have described the unicorn in their writings ; but these eminent authors borrowed their statements from *Ctesias*, a writer of little respectability. Had the unicorn existed in any part of the east, it must have been discovered and brought to Rome, by those who were employed by the Romans to explore the remotest countries, with the express view of collecting the rarest animals they contained, in order to be exhibited at the public shows. The tiger, the rhinoceros, and other animals, natives of regions which the Roman eagles never visited, were often exhibited in the amphitheatre, before the proud oppressors of the world. So numerous and diversified were the animals produced on the arena at their public entertainments, that *Aristides*, in his encomium of Rome, declared, “ All things meet here, whatsoever is bred or made ; and whatsoever is not seen here, is to be reckoned among those things which are not, nor ever were.” But, although these shows continued for many ages, not a single unicorn was ever exhibited at Rome ; a strong proof that no such animal ever existed. In modern times, the remotest countries in Asia have been traversed, in almost every direction, by intelligent and inquisitive travellers ; but no animal of this kind has been discovered ; nor has the least information been obtained concerning the unicorn, among the natives. From these facts it may be safely concluded, that the unicorn exists only in the imagination of vain and credulous writers, and by consequence, cannot be the reem of the sacred Scriptures.

The rhinoceros, on the contrary, was often exhibited in the amphitheatre at Rome ; and has been frequently seen by modern travellers. No doubt, therefore, can be entertained concerning the reality of its existence : but the character of the reem, given in the Scriptures, will not apply to this animal.

The reem, it is evident, was equally well known to Moses and the prophets, and the people whom they addressed, as the bullocks and the bulls with which they are mentioned. But the rhinoceros inhabits the southern parts of Africa, and the remotest parts of the east, beyond the Ganges; and by consequence, could be still less known to the people of Israel than the elephant, which is not once mentioned in the sacred volume.

Besides, the reem has large horns; for, says the Psalmist, "My horn shalt thou exalt like the horn of an unicorn;" but the rhinoceros has seldom more than one, and that of a small size, not exalted like the horn of a reem, but turned back towards the forehead. Nor will the use to which the reem applies his horns, correspond with the manners of the rhinoceros: the former pushes with his horns, which must therefore be placed on his forehead; but the horn of the latter, which is placed on his nose, and bent backwards, is not formed for pushing, but for ripping up the trunks or bodies of the more soft and succulent trees, and reducing them into a kind of laths, which constitute a part of the animal's food*.

It is the opinion of others, that the reem is a species of wild bull; which they have endeavoured to establish by several plausible arguments. In many places of Scripture, say they, the ox and the reem are joined together, as animals of the same family; in others, the latter is represented as a strong and fierce animal, with large and very strong horns, greatly addicted to push, and by consequence, an enemy much to be dreaded. The reem, therefore, cannot be the buffalo, because his horns being turned inward are unfit for the combat; but either the bison, or the urus. It is rather supposed, however, that the urus is the reem of the Hebrews, because the bison, though a very fierce and obstinate animal, may be subdued by the art of man, and at length entirely domesticated. But as to the urus, Cæsar says expressly, that they cannot be tamed and rendered useful to mankind, not even their young ones excepted; they are there-

* Bruce's Trav. vol. 4. p. 91.

fore taken in pits and destroyed. Pliny thus describes the urus: He is of a size little inferior to the elephant; in appearance, colour, and figure, he resembles the bull; his strength and velocity are great; and he neither spares man nor beast that comes in his way.

These arguments have considerable weight; but they are liable to the same objections which these very writers have urged with so much force against the claims of the unicorn and the rhinoceros. It is by no means probable, that the sacred writers would make so many allusions to animals, with which the people whom they addressed were utterly unacquainted; would speak so familiarly about them; would borrow their figures and illustrations from their form, dispositions, and manners; or, that Jehovah himself would converse with Job so long about a creature, which was unknown to the people of those countries. The urus sculked from the remotest times, in the deep recesses of the Hircanian forest; and was quite unknown to the Romans before the time of Cæsar. Neither the urus nor the bison, according to Pliny, were to be found in Greece; and the former has been considered by some authors, as a native of Germany. It is even admitted by Boetius, who strenuously maintains the claims of the urus, that he can find no writer who says, that these wild oxen are produced in Syria and Palestine. Aben Ezra, on the contrary, asserts in his commentary on the prophecies of Hosea, that no wild bull is to be found in Judea, and the surrounding countries. It is not sufficient to say, that these varieties of the bovine family, may have existed there in the times of Moses and the prophets, for a mere conjecture proves nothing. If they existed once, why do they not exist now, as well as the wild goat, the hart, and the antelope? Why is not a single trace of them to be found in the warmer climates of Greece and Asia? Pliny indeed states, that the Indian forests abounded with wild oxen; but it will not follow, that the urus was known to the Jews, because it was discovered in the forests of India, the regions of Scythia,

or the remote wilds of Africa. But the truth is, we have no proof that he meant to speak of the urus or the bison; he only mentions wild oxen in general; from which no certain argument can be drawn in support of the opinion which Boetius and others maintain.

It now remains to be shewn, that the reem of the Old Testament Scriptures is not a variety of the wild ox, but must be classed among the goats. This point the learned Bochart has decided, by numerous quotations from the Arabian, and other eastern writers, in which the original word reem is applied to a species of wild goat, which inhabits the deserts of Palestine, and the neighbouring regions. The statements of the Arabian writers, as quoted by him, are clear and precise; "The reem," says one, "is a goat of a snow white colour;" another, "The reem, the plural of which is aram, denotes a goat of a pure white colour, like those which inhabit the sandy deserts." Goats, says Damir, are of different colours; they are of three distinct species, of which the first are called aram, the singular of which is reem. Their colour is a pure white; they inhabit the desert, and become very fat. From these testimonies it is evident, that the word reem among the Arabians, denoted the noblest species of wild goat, equally remarkable for its obesity, and the snowy whiteness of its colour. This species are also distinguished by carrying their heads very high, and pricking their ears; from whence it is apprehended, they derive their name. In this application of the original term, the Syriac version, the Chaldee paraphrasts, and the Talmudical writers, all agree with the Arabian historians*.

To invalidate the force of these arguments, it has been urged, that the reem is connected in the sacred writings with bullocks and bulls, and must therefore be some kindred animal. He stands high on his limbs, and has a large and portly frame; while the goat is the smallest of the horned tribes. The former is represented in the book of Job, as very strong, and a fit companion

* See Bocharti Hieroz. b. 3.

for the ox in the labours of the field; and prevented from taking part in tilling the ground, bringing home the seed, and gathering it into the barn, only by his fierce and intractable disposition. But a goat is not possessed of great strength, although sufficiently vigorous and active for the sphere in which it is intended to move; it is too weak to draw in the same yoke with the ox, or to take any part in the toils of the husbandman. Hence, in all ages, and among every people, the wild, equally as the domestic goat, has been exempted from the yoke; and their immunity confirmed by the ancient adage, *Ελευθεροι αιγες αροσγων*, goats are exempted from the plough. We learn from the prayer of David, already quoted, that the horns of the reem are high; but those of the goat, although somewhat elongated, are not to be compared with the antlers of the stag. It deserves also to be particularly remarked, that the reem is a fierce and dangerous animal; while it is universally acknowledged that the goat is a timid and harmless creature.

From this comparison it has been inferred, that the reem, and the wild goat of the desert, must be two different animals. But if these plausible objections are carefully examined, they will be found insufficient to support the conclusion, for the sake of which they are brought forward. If the reem is a kindred animal to bullocks and bulls, because it is mentioned in the same verse, then goats and rams must be animals of the same species, for they are as nearly connected in the preceding verse*; and for the same reason, rams, and goats, and bullocks, “all of them fatlings of Bashan,” must be numbered among the beeves, for the prophet mentions them in the same passage†. When the sacred writer speaks of the height and superior strength of that particular species of goat, he does not mean to compare him with the elephant or the bull, but only with those of his own species; he intends merely to assert that the reem, or white goat of the desert, is a much higher and stronger animal than any other of the same species. To this

* Isa. xxxiv. 6, 7.

† Ezek. xxxix. 18.

may be referred the words of Balaam concerning Israel: "He hath as it were, the *heights* of an unicorn:" that is, his stature resembles that of a reem. The meaning of the prediction seems to be, that Israel should be as eminent among the nations, as the reem among the goats; or the prophet refers, perhaps, to the erect attitude for which the white goat of the desert is so remarkable, in order to illustrate the rising spirit and improving condition of Israel, since their emancipation from Egyptian bondage; and the high degree of prosperity and glory which they were destined to attain. The strength and vigour of the white goat, although not to be compared with the prodigious power of some animals, is by no means inconsiderable; and nothing prevents him, and others of the same species, from being yoked in the plough, which in those countries is so light that a man may easily carry it in his hand, and performing his part in the labours of the field, but his intractable temper. The Arabian historians represent his horns as very formidable weapons. The doe, says Gesner, resembles the goat in size, figure, and hair: he has horns like a stag, but smooth, long and sharp: he is, however, swift of foot, jealous of his safety, and given to push with his horns. Now if the doe, of which the white goat is a variety, has long sharp horns, with which he is apt to strike his adversaries, the objection relating to the horns of the reem, will be easily removed: if they are long, David might justly say in prayer, "Thou shalt exalt my horn like the horn of the reem;" if they are sharp and ready to be employed against an opponent, Moses might justly say in relation to Joseph, "His horns are the horns of the reem; with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth." The goat is, in general, a timid and harmless animal; but this is not the case in every instance, for in some places he displays great energy and resolution, and if Oppian may be credited, often attacks the wild boar, and obtains the victory. The doe has been known to engage in desperate combat, and to yield

the victory only with his life*. But the reem, or white goat, is a much fiercer animal, which, in the amphitheatre at Rome, where he was often exhibited for the amusement of the people, spread destruction among the dogs by which he was opposed†. There is, says Oppian, a certain tenant of the forest, a beast with a sharp horn, the savage oryx, extremely formidable to the wild beasts. In another passage, he describes him as naturally an intrepid and warlike animal, that neither fears the fury of a dog, nor the rage of a wild boar; that shrinks not from the threatening voice of a bull, from the terrific yell of a leopard, nor the inflamed wrath of a lion. So great is his boldness, that he regards not the attack of man: often, too, the robust hunter, who ventures to encounter him, pushed from the rock by the fury of his onset, pays the forfeit of his rashness with his life. When he sees a wild boar, or a lion, preparing to attack him, he immediately lowers his head, inclining it a little to one side, and watching his opportunity, rushes upon his adversary, and with the points of his long sharp horns, pierces his breast. Whether the oryx be precisely the same animal as the white goat of the desert, may be doubted; but it is clearly admitted by Pliny, and other early writers, that the oryx is a species of goat, of a pure white colour, his double spine loaded with fat, with long sharp horns rising from his forehead, black and hard as flint or iron. He, therefore, bears a striking resemblance to the white goat of the desert, if he is not the very same creature; and by consequence might belong to that class of animals which the Hebrews distinguished by the name reem, and the Chaldee paraphrasts by rima and remanin.

The size of the oryx also seems to correspond with the brief notices which the inspired writers have given us of the reem. He stands for the most part higher on his limbs than the ox‡, and is not much inferior in size to the rhinoceros§. Thus his

* Martialis Epigram, b. 5.

† B. 13. Epigram, 95.

‡ Herod.

§ Oppian.

character agrees in every particular with the description of the reem in the holy Scriptures.

The oryx inhabits the solitudes of Africa, on the confines of Egypt; from whence he might easily make excursions into the deserts which border on the land of Canaan. He seems indeed to have been properly an Egyptian animal, and familiarly known to the inhabitants of that country*. His character and habits must have been well known to the people of Israel, that sojourned for several centuries in Egypt, and spent their time chiefly in tending their flocks and herds in the pastures of Goshen, where they probably had many opportunities of meeting him, and many reasons, perhaps, to remember his strength and intrepidity. After their deliverance from the Egyptian yoke, they settled in a neighbouring country, and had occasional intercourse with Egypt. These facts account for the frequent mention of the oryx under the name of the reem, in the sacred volume; and the interesting allusions to its dispositions and manners.

In the opinion of ancient writers, the oryx is distinguished by another name in the sacred volume. The Hebrew term (אֵרֶם) *theo*, in Deuteronomy †, which our translators render *wild ox*, Jerome translates *oryx*; and Aquila uses the same term in translating a passage in Isaiah, as an equivalent for (אֵרֶם) *tho*, in our version a wild bull ‡. Many interpreters, beside the English translators, are disposed to consider these Hebrew terms as the proper name of the buffalo, or some species of wild ox. But it has been already shewn, that Judea and the surrounding countries possessed no wild oxen of any kind; and that three varieties of that animal are the natives of a cold climate. The buffalo, it is admitted, is bred in southern latitudes; but in ancient times, he seems to have been confined to the remotest parts of the east. No mention is made of him, at least, by any writer before the Christian era; for the *βεβαλος* or *βεβαλις* of the ancient Greeks, was the name of a wild goat §. Besides,

* Bochart, b. 3. p. 971. † Deut. xiv. 5. ‡ Isa. li. 20. § Boch. Hieroz.

the wild bull was not taken in a net; but, according to the ancients, in a deep pit, for he is too powerful and furious an animal to be detained by a snare of that kind; but every variety of the deer, and consequently the oryx, it was the custom to hunt with nets and dogs. This statement renders it extremely probable that the Hebrew word *tho* or *theo*, was a name given to the oryx, the white goat of the desert.

The Coney.

The Hebrew name of this animal, is derived from a verb which signifies to hide, and seems to indicate a creature of a timid and harmless disposition. Unable to avoid or encounter the various dangers to which it would be exposed in the plain, it seeks a shelter among the rocks, in the fissures of which it hides itself from the pursuit of its enemies. This circumstance is attested by the sacred writer in one of the songs of Zion: "The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats, and the rocks for the (שפנים) shaphans*." The choice which the shaphan makes of the rock for the place of its abode, is mentioned by Solomon as a proof of sagacity: "The shaphans are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks†." It is evident from these words also, that the shaphan is a gregarious animal, although they afford us no hint from which the numbers which constitute their little communities may be inferred.

To what particular animal the name shaphan really belongs, has been much disputed among the learned. In our version, it is rendered by the word coney or rabbit; in which our translators have followed the greater part of modern interpreters. Several circumstances seem to favour this interpretation; it is twice connected in the law of Moses with the hare, as if it were a kindred animal; the noun in the plural, is rendered hares by the Seventy, in which they have been followed by many ancient interpreters of great name: the meaning of shaphan, seems to correspond with the timidity of the rabbit; and it is

* Psa. civ. 18.

† Prov. xxx. 26.

certain, that the Rabbinnical writers formerly interpreted the original word in this manner. Besides, the rabbit is a gregarious animal, of a diminutive size, and found in great numbers in the plain of Jericho*. But these facts are not sufficient to establish the point for which they are brought forward; for, instead of seeking a habitation in the fissures of the rocks, the rabbit delights to burrow in the sandy downs. Sometimes indeed, he digs a receptacle for himself in rocky eminences, where the openings are filled with earth, but he generally prefers a dwelling in the sand, a situation for which he is evidently formed by Nature. The words of David clearly shew, that the instincts and habits of the shaphan, as naturally and constantly lead him to the rocks for shelter, as those of his associate impel him to rove among the mountains. He does not allude to an occasional residence, but to a fixed and permanent abode; to the wanderings of a few, but to the habitual choice of a whole species. But the rabbit as uniformly seeks the sandy plain, as the wild goat the summit of the mountain. The shaphan, according to Solomon, discovers great wisdom and sagacity in retiring from the plain country, to the natural fastness which the almighty Creator has provided for its reception; but it is no mark of wisdom in the rabbit, that he forsakes occasionally the sandy plain, which he is naturally formed to occupy, and retires to the rocks which are so little suited to his habits and manners. This is an act of rashness or folly, not of wisdom. The wise man is also noting the sagacity of a whole species, not of a rambling individual; but the species is to be found on the plain, not among the rocks. Nor is the rabbit a feeble creature; he runs with considerable swiftness; and he is provided with the means of digging his burrow, which he employs with so great energy, particularly when alarmed by the approach of danger, that he buries himself in the sand with surprising rapidity. To exert his strength, according to existing circumstances, is all the sagacity which he

* Doubdan.

discovers; and this it must be admitted, is not peculiar to him, but common to the hare, the hedge-hog, and many other animals. He betrays no foresight, except in preparing his dwelling, and he is never known to supply the want of strength by any contrivance. The shaphan, as described both by David and Solomon, exhibits a very different character, and therefore, cannot be the same animal.

But if we apply these characters to the daman Israel, or as Mr Bruce calls it the ashkoko, the identity of this animal with the shaphan of the Scriptures, will instantly appear: "The daman is a harmless creature, of the same size and quality with the rabbit, and with the like incurvating posture and disposition of the foreteeth. But it is of a browner colour, with smaller eyes, and a head more pointed, like the marmots; the forefeet likewise are short, and the hinder are nearly as long in proportion as those of the jerboa. Though this animal is known sometimes to burrow in the ground, yet he is so much attached to the rock, that he is seldom or never seen on the ground, or from among large stones in the mouth of caves, where he fixes his constant residence. He is gregarious, as the wise man intimates, and lives in families; he is a native of Judea, Palestine, and Arabia, and consequently, must have been familiar to Solomon, and other inspired writers. The royal Psalmist, in a passage already quoted, describes him with great propriety, and joins him with other animals which were perfectly known in that country. Solomon favours us with a more detailed account of his character: "There be four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise; the sephanim are a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks." This exactly corresponds with the character which natural historians give us of the daman Israel, which they represent as equally feeble in body and temper. The toes of his forefeet very much resemble the fingers of the human hand; his feet are perfectly round, very pulpy or fleshy, liable to be excoriated or hurt, and of a soft fleshy substance. They are

quite inadequate to dig holes in the ground, much more to force their way into the hard rock. Unable or afraid to stand upright on his feet, he steals along every moment as it were apprehensive of danger, his belly almost close to the ground, advancing a few steps at a time, and then pausing, as if afraid or uncertain whether he should proceed. His whole appearance and behaviour indicate a mild, feeble, and timid disposition; which is confirmed by the ease with which he is tamed. Conscious as it were of his total inability to dig in the ground, or to mingle with the sterner beasts of the field, he builds his house on rocks, more inaccessible than those to which the coney retires, and in which he resides in greater safety, not by exertions of strength, for he has it not, but by his own sagacity and judgment. Solomon has therefore justly characterized him "a feeble animal, but exceeding wise."

The Arabian writers confound the daman Israel, with the jerboa, which seems to be a species of rat. It ruminates, builds its house on the rocks, or digs its abode on the ground, but always in some high and rocky place, where it may be safe from the influx of waters, and the foot of the wild beast. If we may believe the Arabic writer quoted by Bochart, these diminutive animals discover no little sagacity in the conduct of public affairs, particularly in appointing a leader, whose business it is to give them notice on the approach of danger, and who in case of neglect is punished with death, and succeeded by another more attentive to their safety. Mr Bruce, on the contrary, contends with great earnestness, that the habits of the jerboa are quite different from those which Solomon ascribes to the shaphan; he asserts, that the jerboa always digs his habitation in the smoother places of the desert, especially where the soil is fixed gravel; for in that chiefly he burrows, dividing his hole below into many mansions. He is not gregarious like the shaphan, nor is he distinguished for his feebleness, which he supplies by his wisdom. Although, therefore, he ruminates in common with some other animals, and abounds in Judea, he cannot be the

shaphan of the Scripture. Hence, it is probable, that the Arabian writers improperly confounded the daman Israel, or shaphan, and the jerboa; and it may be considered as nearly certain, that the shaphan of Solomon is not the rabbit, but the daman Israel, which, though bearing some resemblance to it, is an animal of a different species*.

The Mouse.

This animal is so very diminutive, that the Jewish naturalist places it among the reptiles, refusing it the honour of appearing among the quadrupeds. But, small and apparently insignificant as it is, in the oriental regions it often produces greater calamities than are experienced from all the beasts of prey with which they are infested. Formidable by its activity, its voraciousness, and its countless numbers, it lays waste the fields of Palestine and Syria, devours their harvests, and spreads famine and wretchedness among the helpless inhabitants. The extent and severity of the distress in which its ravages frequently involve the people of those countries, are sufficiently attested by the offering of five golden mice, from the lords of the Philistines, to appease the wrath of God, and avert the plague under which they had so greatly suffered. The account of this transaction is recorded in the first book of Samuel, and runs in these terms: "Then said they, what shall be the trespass offering which we shall return to him? They answered, five golden emerods, and five golden mice, according to the number of the lords of the Philistines: for one plague was on you all, and on your lords. Wherefore ye shall make images of your emerods, and images of your mice, which mar the land; and ye shall give glory unto the God of Israel: peradventure he will lighten his hand from off you, and from off your gods, and from off your lands †." These words undoubtedly intimate, that Palestine was very often visited by this scourge, and that the sufferings of its inhabitants were very severe. The devastations of this little destructive creature were so frequent, so extensive,

* See Zoolog. Essays, Chris. Mag. vol. 6.

† 1 Sam. vi. 4, 5.

and followed by such dreadful consequences, that even the unenlightened Philistines considered them as an immediate judgment from God himself. In modern times, instances of the same calamity are not wanting. About the beginning of the twelfth century, innumerable swarms of locusts and mice, during four successive years, so completely ravaged that country, as to produce almost a total failure of the necessaries of life. So great and general was the distress of the people, that a kind of penitential council was held at Naplouse, in the year 1120, for the reformation of manners, and to invoke the mercy of the Almighty, who had been provoked by their sins to inflict upon them such terrible judgments*.

The Badger.

To enter into the history of this animal is unnecessary, as it is mentioned in Scripture only on account of its skin. This part of the animal seems to have been in great request among the people of Israel, for it is mentioned among the valuable articles which they were permitted to offer for the tabernacle: "Rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' skins†." These last formed the exterior covering of that splendid structure, and of all the sacred utensils, which the Levites were commanded to spread over them during their march. Of these also the shoes of the mystical bride were formed, when, according to the representation of the prophet, she was richly adorned for the marriage. Jehovah had chosen Israel to be his peculiar people, and had bestowed upon them innumerable favours, but they had become ungrateful and perfidious, like a woman who proves inconstant and unfaithful to her husband, who had raised her from the meanest condition, to the greatest affluence and splendor: "Thou becamest mine. Then I washed thee with water; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil. I clothed thee also with brodered work, and shod thee with badgers' skin; and I girded thee

* Harmer's Obser. vol. 3, p. 395.

† Exod. xxv. 5, and xxxv. 23.

about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk *." In this passage, badgers' skin is mentioned as a very precious and splendid substance, such as might be made into shoes for ladies of the highest rank, and worn on their marriage day; while, in the book of Exodus, they are represented as very coarse and homely, fit only to be made a covering for the tabernacle, and its furniture, during the journies of the tribes. These very different representations cannot easily be reconciled, and involve the subject in doubt and uncertainty. And indeed the the original word (חַרְחַר) *thahash*, which our translators render badgers' skins, is of very uncertain meaning. It is evident from Scripture, that it was a kind of skin which, being capable of resisting rain, was manufactured by the people of Israel into coverings for the tabernacle and its furniture, and into shoes for persons of the highest rank in the state. But the inspired writers furnish no details from which it can be inferred, to what animal it originally belonged; it is even extremely doubtful, whether the word rendered badger, denotes an animal at all. The Seventy interpreters considered it merely as the name of a colour, and uniformly translate it hyacinth, or hyacinthine. In this opinion, they were followed by all the ancient translators of the Scriptures, without one exception; and the same idea has been adopted by the learned Bochart, and other eminent moderns. The reasons on which their interpretation is founded, seem to be quite conclusive.

In the first place, no evidence can be found that the badger ever existed in Palestine, Arabia, or Egypt. Dr Shaw made particular inquiry, but could hear of no such animal in Barbary†. Harmer was unable to discover in modern travels, the smallest traces of the badger in Egypt, or in any of the adjacent countries; Buffon represents it as unknown in that part of Asia. So little was the badger known to the ancients, that the Greeks had not a word in their language by which to express it; and the Latin term which is supposed to denote this ani-

* Ezek. xvi. 8—14.

† Shaw's Trav.

mal, is extremely doubtful *. But if the badger is not a native of the east, if it is not to be found in those countries, from whence could the people of Israel in the wilderness, procure its skin to cover the tabernacle? It is an animal of small size, and is no where found in great numbers; and, by consequence, its skin could not in remote times, more than at present, constitute an article of commerce in the ports of Egypt, and come at last into the possession of that people. The exterior covering of the tabernacle, and its bulky utensils, must have required a greater number of skins, than could be procured even in the native country of the badger; and, therefore, it must have been formed of leather, fabricated from the skin of some other animal, which not only existed, but also abounded in Egypt, and the adjacent countries.

The coarseness of the leather, fabricated of badgers' skin, which, in the east, is reluctantly employed for the meanest purposes of life, forbids us to consider it as the material of which the elegant shoes of an oriental lady are formed. When the prophet says in the name of Lord, "I clothed thee also with broidered work, and shod thee with badgers' skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk," he certainly meant, that the shoes, corresponding to the other parts of the dress, were formed of costly materials. The Targum accordingly translates the passage, "I put precious shoes upon thy feet;" but this could be said with no propriety of shoes made of badgers' skins.

Nor can it be supposed, that the skin of an animal, which the law of Moses pronounces unclean, strictly enjoins the people of Israel not to touch, or if they did happen to touch it, not to worship at the tabernacle, till the ceremonial pollution which they had accidentally contracted was removed according to the precept,—would be employed to cover that sacred structure, and its consecrated utensils, and that the Levites should be obliged often to handle it in performing the duties of their

* Boch, Hieroz.

office. The sacred implements of Jewish worship, certainly were defended from the injuries of the weather, by the skins of clean beasts, which were easily procured, and that in sufficient numbers, even in the wilderness. This idea, so conformable to the spotless purity required in the ceremonial law, has been adopted and maintained by all the earlier Jewish writers, whose authority in matters of this kind is entitled to great respect. Many disputes indeed have been agitated among them, in relation to the particular animal employed; but none of them before the time of Jarchi, who flourished about the middle of the eleventh century, supposed that it was the skin of the badger.

These considerations leave no room for doubt in the mind of the writer, that the original term denotes neither the badger, nor any other animal, but merely a colour. What particular colour is meant, it may not be easy to ascertain; but when it is considered, that people of rank and fashion in the east, were accustomed to appear in purple shoes, it is extremely probable, that purple was the colour intended by the sacred writer.

“*Virginibus Tyriis most est gestare pharetram*

Purpureoque alte cruras vincere cothurno.” *Vir.*

The Chaldee paraphrast accordingly, expounds the words of the Song, “How beautiful are thy feet with shoes,” how beautiful are the feet of Israel, when they go up to appear three times before the Lord in purple sandals! The Roman emperors, and the kings of Persia, reserved by a formal edict, shoes of a purple colour for their own use; and it is said, red shoes were among the insignia of the ancient kingdom of Bulgaria. Hence, Isaac Comnenus, the Roman emperor, deprived the patriarch of Constantinople of his dignity, because he presumed to put on shoes of a crimson colour, although these were formerly worn at Rome by persons of the senatorial order*.

* See Essays on Sacred Zoology, Christ. Mag. vol. 6.

ERRATA.

Page 5, line 16, *for* visited, *read* visit.

„ 11, „ 8, *for* situated, *read* situate.

„ 11, „ 17, *Dele* But.

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